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MYSTIC

MAGAZINE

March 1954

35¢

ASSIGNMENT TO LIFE

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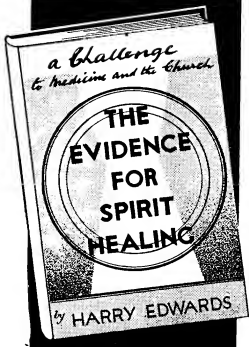
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MAGAZINE**

Issue No. 3

Editors: Ray Palmer, Bea Mahaffey

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Editorially Speaking...

AMONG the letters we have received from readers, there the two opposite viewpoints—and because of them we believe the real purpose of MYSTIC Magazine should be explained in greater detail. One of the letters said: "This magazine was advertised to be fiction. I have read it from cover to cover, and there is not a word of fiction in it! It is all true!" The other letter said: "If I had thought your magazine was to be fiction, I would not have been interested."

MYSTIC is not wholly fiction, nor is it wholly fact. We are presenting factual articles, such as the Angelucci story in which the first instance of travel in a saucer was told. The article (in this issue) by Pat Fox is a True Mystic Adventure. We plan to present many true mystic stories; as many as we can get—and we believe as time goes on we will present some of the most startling true stories you have ever read. We further present factual articles such as William B. Nash's article on whether or not the Saucers are friendly. Mr. Nash is one of the pilots who actually saw one, and his piece is certainly not fiction. It is theory based on observation.

Equally, MYSTIC is not wholly fact—and herein lies what we consider to be the most interesting

and important thing about MYSTIC. The editors insist on one rule in the fiction presented—and that is the use of *legitimate* occult and mystic background. In brief, the stories, while not true, are based on truth. They tell, in an entertaining and understandable form, mystic truths. Just take "Assignment to Life . ." by Sanandana Kumara, himself a noted mystic, in which the mystic truth that higher powers have placed guardians over us is brought out, and the means employed is graphically explained. True, the fanciful elements of this story render it a piece of fiction, but a very beautiful piece of fiction, with an inspiring message, and carrying with it a conviction of the truth behind it. If you do not feel stirred to the depths of your soul as you finish reading it, something is wrong with your emotional centers! If, when you read "The Kid With The Beautiful Hands" you do not feel the presence of the Savior Himself, then you are incapable of inspiration.

Every day in our mail we get stories we must reject, and here are some of the reasons we give to the authors: "Your story is a straight weird type story, having no occult factual background," or "we don't want horror stories," or "your story lacks an inspira-

tional quality we insist upon in our mystic fiction." The fact is we reject these authors *because they do not know what they are talking about*. In straight fiction, must you be possessed of any particular *factual* knowledge? Well, in MYSTIC's fiction you *must*. You cannot write a story of reincarnation without understanding the principles that lie behind the belief in reincarnation. You cannot write a story of the spirit world unless you know what mankind has discovered about the spirit world to date. You cannot write a story about the doings of the "guardians", unless you know what a guardian is. You cannot convince a *true* mystic that you are anything but an imposter, if you don't even know the basic elements of the subject you are attempting to portray in *realistic* fiction. For that is what fiction is—the portraying in an illusory manner, of *reality*. The art of *making-believe* so that it seems *real*.

Another thing that a story in MYSTIC is intended to do is to convey a message; to acquaint the reader with a fact or theory about which he has no knowledge, in a way that is illustrative and yet painless. Actually MYSTIC does not attempt to teach, but it does attempt to *display*, so that the student can gain inspiration for himself, become interested in the mystic.

Many times we have seen peo-

ple, when told of some particularly unbelievable mystic occurrence, ask for *proof*. Occult science has been trying to get proof of survival, of unseen things, for many years. Actual scientific proof is rigorous, and extremely difficult to get. The veracity of a witness is questioned (for example, the effect on any group of anyone telling of the flying saucer he saw—he is laughed at, asked to produce photos, etc.) and he is asked to *affirm* the truth of his story. And when he has, it means nothing. Even liars can make out affidavits!

This is the third issue of MYSTIC. Perhaps you will note that there is some improvement over the first two issues. Perhaps you have said to yourself as you read the foregoing words, "the first two issues violated many of the principles just laid down." When you have finished this issue you may find the statement still applicable. But do you realize what a task it is to *produce* a magazine of a type *never before published*? Place yourself in the position of the editors of this magazine. Where would you look for writers able to write what you want? It is like advertising for an "experienced" space pilot to go on the very first flight into space. He just doesn't exist! You must take writers of other types of material, and *educate* them. You must select, from what is submitted to you, the

(Continued on page 14)

ARE THE SAUCERS OUR FRIENDS?

By William B. Nash

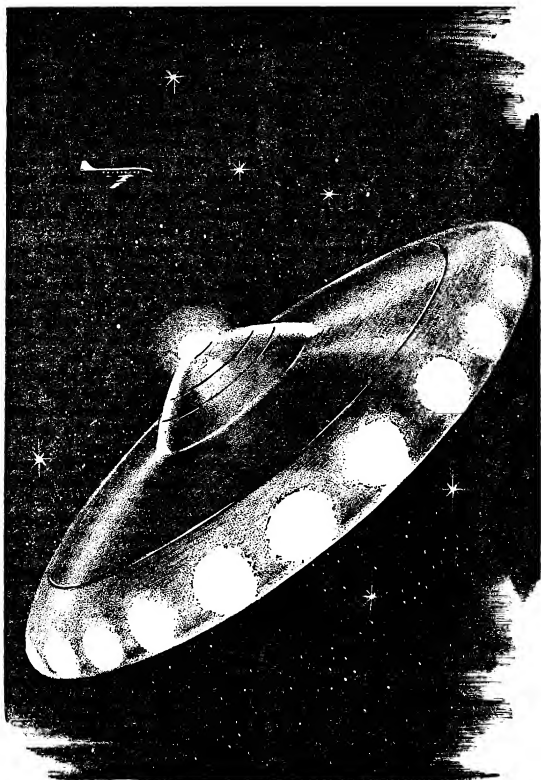
Here is an article written by a man who is eminently qualified to write on flying saucers and the question of whether or not they are friendly because he has seen eight of them himself (*TRUE Magazine* published his account in the October, 1952 issue and gave him an exceptionally good reputation). Since the time of his sighting, he has collected data and studied it from all angles in the attempt to answer certain dominant questions about the saucers. Those answers are in the article you are about to read. Mr. Nash, whose purpose is to counteract the "sensation" magazines who attempt to show the saucers are our enemies and a dire threat to our civilization, and to show that the opposite is more likely to be true, is a pilot for Pan American World Airways, and a lieutenant, junior grade, in the United States Reserve.

EVER since William H. For-
tenberry, and I saw eight
flying saucers near Nor-
folk, Virginia in July of 1952, I
have been seeking the answers to
many questions about them which
have been tantalizing my cu-
riosity.

One of the most haunting ques-
tions is, of course; What is the
purpose behind this thorough in-
spection that our planet seems to
be undergoing? It must be obvious
to everyone by now that our world
is being systematically explored
by visitors from another planet

within our own solar system, or
from a planet of another solar sys-
tem; but why? The whole answer
to the question is undoubtedly out
of our reach unless we are success-
ful in making some kind of a con-
tact with the intelligent beings
behind this mystery.

Capt. Jack Adams, flying his Chicago and Southern airlines plane over Stuttgart, Ark., saw a flying disk cross the sky at about 500 miles per hour. It seemed to have windows extending around the outer rim, and to have a blue light atop it which blinked rapidly.



However, part of this intriguing question can be answered by analyzing the experiences we have had thus far with these space-craft and their occupants. We can learn something by observing what they have *not* done. Thus far there has been no evidence of aggressive hostility on the part of the saucers. We have made hostile moves toward them, but they have shown no desire to attack us, or to bring one of our aircraft down.

However, this record cannot be used alone as evidence that they do not some day *intend* to raid us. It could be that if such is their plan, they are not yet ready for the big and final move. Other evidence must be introduced and considered before we can deduce that our visitors are friendly, as I am convinced that they are.

I know that immediately the case of Captain Mantell in Kentucky in 1948 will occur to the reader who has been following saucer reports, as an example of aggression on the part of the saucers. (Captain Mantell's fighter plane crashed after he had reported to the control tower that he would pursue a large spherical object up to twenty thousand feet.) However, we must remember that there has been no supporting evidence that the sphere caused his crash, and even if it did, the act could have been in self-defense. Perhaps, as early as 1948, these space-explorers were unaware of

the limitations of our comparatively earthbound aircraft. This sphere was reported by reliable military observers to be at least 500 feet in diameter. If so, it is probably the largest of the space-craft to have come that close to the Earth's surface, and its acceleration speed might have been limited in our lower atmosphere, thus making it necessary for them to defend themselves.

Another case which might appear to the reader to have been an act of aggression is the case of Scoutmaster J. D. Desvergers, of West Palm Beach, Florida, who had the experience of having a ball of fire "shot" at him from a hovering saucer. Paradoxically this is one of the cases that I intend to use as possible evidence that the operators of the saucers are friendly toward us!

Attempting to solve the question "Are the saucers our friends?" turned out for me to be not unlike a detective trying to solve a mystery. Much obvious evidence was in the records, but the link to connect it all was missing. Then suddenly it showed up.

The link appeared in the form of the reproduction of an Atlanta, Georgia, newspaper clipping following an impressive article in a May, 1953, issue of a national magazine. The article was written by a private pilot named Fred Regan, and was published posthumously.

Mr. Regan's startling story de-

scribed a collision in July of 1951 with a flying disc while he, in his Piper Cub, and the saucer were both in active flight at 8000 feet. The Cub crashed, a total wreck, but Fred Regan was found beside it with no evidence of injury, but in an unconscious state. He awakened in a hospital and told an incredible story of having been "caught" in mid air by some force after the collision, and pulled into a dark compartment through a round hatch. Shortly thereafter he heard a strange voice apologizing for the destruction of his aircraft, assuring him that he was intact, but warning him to say nothing of how he had been rescued; that he would not be believed. He did not heed the warning, and no credence was ever given his story, for which people could hardly be blamed.

However, less than two years later he died, and though he had never worked near atomic fission, the Atlanta newspaper story announced that the cause of his death was determined to be a degeneration of brain tissue due to extreme atomic radiation. Authorities were unable to offer an explanation, but the article conjectured again about the strange story of his accident.

If Fred Regan's story is indeed true, then he must have suffered much more exposure to radiation from the underside of the saucer while its power was on in flight, than the occupants of the saucer

realized. Regan said that he had tried to duck his little airplane under the disk to avoid it, but it struck the top of his fuselage and knocked him out of the airplane. Thus his head must have been the closest part of his body to any possible radiation from the craft's power exits.

It seems very likely then, that a dangerous radiation exists immediately beneath the saucers when their power is in operation, and that it would be damaging to any living tissue exposed to it. The occupants evidently are shielded from this radiation and are not exposed to it any more than a jet pilot is exposed to the fiery blast that spurts from the rear of his engines. Just imagine, however, what would happen to a man standing in the exhaust of a jet engine! It would not take much of an exposure to kill a man, but if his exposure was brief or when full power was not being used, we might be able to cure him by treating his burns. The same may be true of the saucer people. It is logical that if they have worked around radioactivity very long they have developed a cure for a short exposure to it, but as in Regan's case, perhaps they can not as yet cure the damage done by an *intense* exposure.

Now whether one chooses to believe or not to believe Fred Regan's story, it still supplies the link to connect the following clues that might make you feel the same

as I; that the saucers are friendly and mean us no harm.

Last year, after newspaper headlines announced that U. S. jet fighters had been ordered to "hunt down" the flying saucers, I read a very intelligent letter addressed to the President of the United States, our Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This letter was written by Mr. Meade Layne of the Borderland Sciences Research Association, of San Diego, California, and constituted a plea to the leaders of our country not to attack or attempt to attack the flying saucers. In the course of the letter, Mr. Layne says:

"They come in friendship, with a science over-matching ours by a thousand years. They are engaged in scientific studies of geophysical changes and of our social and political conditions. Their present incursion (one of many in the course of history) was occasioned by the release of atomic energies, which disturbed and alarmed the worlds of their habitation. This threat has now been contained by them, so that their chief concern is with certain startling changes occurring deep within our globe. But they impose no law upon us (though they could enslave us if they so desired), and they exact no tribute and move harmlessly through our skies."

In further revelation of his studies of the saucers Mr. Layne says, "The so-called fireballs in

some instances are 'wipers' designed to offset the radiations and fission products of atomic explosions."

Almost everyone is familiar with the many reports of fireballs having been seen over the United States, especially in our Western States where our atomic explosions have been taking place. For instance, on the night of November 2, 1951 as many as 165 people saw a bright green ball of fire, which appeared larger and considerably brighter than a full Moon, streak across Arizona skies to the East. Its course was parallel to the ground showing no kind of a trajectory or downward motion. Suddenly and without a sound, it exploded into a tremendous flash of light and disappeared. These fireballs have been observed by Dr. Lincoln La Paz, astronomer and director of the institute of meteorites at the University of New Mexico, atomic scientists, and hundreds of weather observers and pilots. Dr. La Paz is convinced that the fireballs are not meteors. He says that meteors are not normally green, that they fall in a trajectory, and that close to the ground they are extremely noisy and leave fragments. No fragments have ever been found where the fireballs exploded.

"Project Twinkle" was formed by the Air Force to investigate the phenomena, but found it difficult to form any conclusions because of the great speed of the



Canada has now built a permanent saucer observing station. When a sighting is made instruments and aircraft will close in.

things.

In the light of all of this, Mr. Layne's claim that the Fireballs are "wipers" seems to be a logical explanation. At the moment we can determine no other purpose even after months of scientific observation. These fireballs appeared in our skies soon after the saucers, so it seems very likely that there is an association, and that the green sky display has a more serious purpose than just being the saucers' form of fireworks.

Now to return to the case of the scoutmaster, Mr. Desvergers, which incident the Air Force has thoroughly investigated but admits that it cannot "explain".

On the night of August 19, 1952, the scoutmaster and three scouts with him all witnessed lights in a wooded area west of West Palm Beach. After directing the scouts to get help if he hadn't returned within ten minutes, Desvergers took two flashlights and a machete from the car and entered the woods. He progressed 200 yards, then entered a clearing. Keeping his eyes on the ground part of the time to avoid stepping into swampy areas, he suddenly felt a "hot" and what he described as a "weak depressed" feeling. He looked up and the stars were gone. He flashed the light upward and was startled to see that his light revealed a seamless metallic gray surface only four feet above him. His first thought was to get from

beneath whatever it was, and he backed up quickly, thinking that he must have walked right under it.

The saucer seemed to be backing away from him too, as though just as surprised at the intrusion, and just as fearful, the scoutmaster thought. Then it tilted up and a hatch in the dome flew open. He will not say much about the figure he saw in the hatch, except to say that there definitely was one, and that the face expressed what he interpreted to be fear.

From the same dome a ball of misty fire that gave off sparks floated directly at his head. It was accompanied by a nauseating stench, and he fell unconscious to the ground.

Watching from the highway, Bob Ruffing, one of the scouts says, "I could see about the top half of his body. Then the beam of his flashlight pointed up and reflected back on him like it had shined on a mirror. Then a reddish white ball of fire like a roman candle came down toward him from the sky. Then he fell down and disappeared."

Could it not be that the purpose of this ball of fire directed at the Scoutmaster's head was to act as a "wiper" to *neutralize the effects of possible exposure to radiation* due to his inadvertent proximity to the underside of the craft? The power must have been operating, because the saucer was suspended off the ground.

Could it not be that the ex-

pression on the figure's features which the scoutmaster interpreted to be fear was not an expression of fear for themselves, but fear that they might have injured one of us?

A race of people as far advanced scientifically as the saucer performance indicates, must also be very much farther advanced socially than we are. Perhaps they have long since found it unnecessary to kill each other or anyone else. In fact, killing might be a revolting thing to them, and they might feel the same revulsion about accidentally killing or injuring a man that we would feel about stepping upon and killing a puppy or a kitten.

Another strange report of a "flare" or fireball from a flying saucer was described by a scientist, Dr. Craig Hunter, technical director for a Washington medical instrument supply firm.

On March 16, 1951 on route 153 between Penfield and Clearfield, Pa., Doctor Hunter had stopped his car and had gotten out of it to look at his automobile engine, since it had been giving him some difficulty. While he was standing at the roadside he was amazed to see a large disc about one hundred feet in diameter fly over the highway from the east. It was he estimated, only about 250 feet high. It was about 25 to 30 feet thick in the center, and about 10 feet thick at the edge, and one third of the edge visible to him was covered

with slits. The saucer seemed to consist of three concentric circular sections, the innermost being the largest. The middle section appeared to be rotating with a great hissing whistle.

The object hovered at its low altitude over the road as though observing Dr. Hunter and his automobile, and Dr. Hunter thought that he detected some movement inside what looked like ports or windows of a sort. Suddenly a reddish fireball shot from the saucer to the highway close to Doctor Hunter, and burned for about thirty seconds as the big disc moved away to the West. Doctor Hunter estimated that he had watched the object for about 2½ minutes.

Could this fireball have been dropped to eliminate any harmful effects that might have been created by the closeness of the craft to the man while it was using its power?

The reports of both Doctor Hunter and Mr. Desvergers were not taken lightly by the Air Force Investigators. Doctor Hunter is a man of science who does some private flying himself, and Mr. Desvergers majored in forestry and chemistry at the University of Florida and served in the United States Marine Corps from 1941 to 1944 in the infantry and later attached to Naval Intelligence.

It does not seem logical that these fireballs could be "flares" to enable the space-visitors to see

better. Even though searchlights have not been reported flashing from the saucers in any of the recent reports (starting with 1947), it would seem that nothing so primitive as a flare would be employed by such an advanced civilization. Neither does it seem sensible to assume that the intent of the fireballs was to harm either of these men. If these strangers wanted to destroy any of us, I am certain that it would be by a swift and sure method. Even though the fireball struck Mr. Desvergers he

was practically unharmed. Compared to full flight, the saucers must employ considerably less atomic power to hover. Therefore, the scoutmaster was probably exposed to only a minimum of radiation, and might not have been harmed even without the "wiper". The saucer people did not gamble on that, but sent the fireball toward him anyway.

I think that by these actions, the saucers have indeed demonstrated that they mean us no harm, but are our friends.

Editorially Speaking...

(Continued from page 5)

closest approach to what you really want, and try to get across to the author where the attempt he has just made is inadequate, and how to come closer to the mark next time.

In this issue you will find several authors coming closer to the mark. You will find that the story by Sanandana Kumara is a story by a man who *knows* his subject. More than that, he has a grasp of what reincarnation really is. Even more, he is advanced beyond the average believer in reincarnation, whose reason for such things is rather haphazard. Everything has a *practical* purpose in the Creator's scheme of things. The idea that dozens of us are reincarnations of Napoleon isn't practical—yet how many times have you

run across the *claim*? Obviously it is a false claim. It may be that reincarnation itself, in that commonly accepted sense, is false. *Why* is what you must ask! And Sanandana Kumara tells us one of the *whys* in a very convincing manner.

In this issue you will find the editor also coming closer to the mark. In a new magazine such as this it is necessary to feel your way cautiously. One cannot come out with a burst like an atom bomb and expect to make instantly clear a concept that many great philosophers have taken centuries to develop, so that the casual reader may grasp it. Nor can one come out with something so complex that it is dull, and therefore fails to capture the interest and the

curiosity of the casual reader. And lastly, it is impossible to keep the casual reader who is *bored*.

Some of our readers have expressed their thoughts concerning MYSTIC by the famous Sherlock Holmes expression: "Elementary, my dear Watson!" Even so. This is not a deep treatise on Mystic Science. This is the *popular* approach. This is for the common man. This is for the 99 and 99/100ths per cent of the people. Were we all "masters", this magazine would be purposeless!

Yet, we are not, we repeat, attempting to be teachers. Rather, we are just one of the common men among other common men, trying to understand the unknown—by the simple expedient of *sharing* our experiences, expressing our theories, exchanging our viewpoints, and presenting our arguments; to say nothing of asking eternal questions of everyone and concerning everything.

Thus, in what you read (if you happen to be further advanced than the rank beginner in mysticism) you may disagree, may find what seem to be "errors", and even readily disprovable statements. If so, you will be charitable and provide yourself with the opportunity to share your own knowledge and experience with the more inept among us. That is the purpose of the department known as "The Seance Circle" in which your letters are printed.

On the factual side, we guaran-

tee that we will present, and continue to present, stories of such sensational nature that you will be able to find them nowhere else.

In the realm of articles, you will find them done by practical people, and authentic by reason of the reliability of the writers. You will find deep mystic theory presented in an understandable way. You will be given comprehensive histories of unusual happenings and developments in the field of philosophical thought. Yet, each article will be written so that you can not only understand it, but find it exciting and entertaining.

The pursuit of happiness is one of the prime tenets of our American Constitution. Nothing should be done anywhere for any reason, without the element of enjoyment in it. Were we to stick to this rule, we'd no longer have wars, we'd no longer find ourselves doing unpleasant things. MYSTIC aims to be the most enjoyable experience in your reading life. There is an old saying: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." MYSTIC expresses it differently: "When adventuring into Mysticism, you need not be an ascetic!"

And with that we invite you to read the contents of this issue and let us know just how well we have been able to express our tenets as we have laid them out for you. We think you'll find a great improvement, and promise of much greater improvement to come.

—Rap.

ASSIGNMENT TO LIFE

By Sanandana Kumara

How is it, as we've so often observed, that just at the precise moment when the course of destiny is at stake, some little event occurs that either alters that course, or prevents it from going astray? Is human destiny really guided by unseen forces? Are there "beings" or entities" whose sole mission on earth is to bring about that tiny push that will send events along the proper path? Today we worry a great deal about the atom bomb and the horror that war with such a weapon would be. Most of us (except perhaps the leaders of nations, who seem intent on arming to the teeth for no other reason than defense) realize the obvious fatal result to civilization of such a war. But we seem unable to do anything about it. Can we hope that when the critical instant comes, there will be some person, not like the rest of us, with the power, and the MISSION, to save us from our own mad hand?

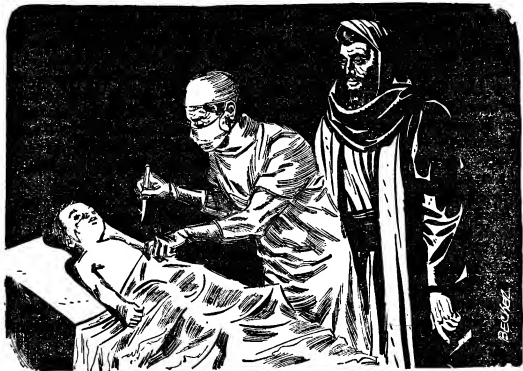
I BECAME aware, and for a while was content just to experience the sensation, without question, without curiosity. It was satisfying, like sitting back content after a good meal. There was, perhaps, a recognition that a moment before I had not been aware. The recognition did not go back to when I must have been aware previously.

After a while I tried to open my eyes. They didn't respond. In fact, it surprised me to realize that I couldn't be quite sure

if I had eyes. That, of course, led immediately to an effort to find out. I could neither see nor hear nor feel. Nor could I be aware of moving any muscles. It was a strange sensation to be so—disembodied?

The concept hit me in the emotions. I became uneasy.

"Something must have happened to me," I said in my thoughts. "Maybe it was an accident. Am I in a hospital? Think back. Maybe it will come to you what happened."



There on the operating table the boy had died. Four minutes the spirit was gone, then the body was alive once more. But I was not a baby, I was a man! What was I doing in a baby boy's body!

The trouble was, I couldn't fix on anything to think back to. I tried. Inevitably I turned to my identity, my name. I couldn't remember my name! It was on the tip of my tongue, but slipped away. Omaz? Gregor? John? Tzrlo? Joe? Ben? *Benedict*? Archy—Archibald? It was no use.

What about events? A picture rose in my thoughts. I was entering a room. I crossed the room as though I knew exactly what I was going to do. I opened a trap door in the floor and

jumped through, letting myself fall—to what? It didn't connect with anything.

I was standing. Something was over my head. I remembered now! A dark hood had been placed over my head. I was waiting. Suddenly I was falling. A terrible pain snapped at my neck—only the pain was at the top of my head, and the vividness of the memory was gone. No connections.

This wasn't getting anywhere. *What was my name?* Now, if someone were to ask me it might

slip out. They'd say, "What's your name?" and I'd say, "Why, it's—" Almost had it there. *Amnesia*.

The word rose as a clear thought, isolated. I viewed it from all sides, and slowly saw its meaning. *Amnesia*. No memory of name or past life. I snorted mentally. I had always been firmly convinced that amnesia was a fake. People *pretended* to have amnesia.

So I was pretending—and doing a good job of fooling myself! Why was I hiding my identity, my past, from myself? Yes! That was what I believed about amnesia. Was it that I *must not know who I was*?

I knew I was a man. Was I deaf? Blind? *Paralyzed*? These were new restrictions or I wouldn't be aware of them at all! Something had happened to me. I was hurt in some way .

So I had been in an accident. It would be all right after a while. My eyes would open. I would be able to see. Right now I was only half conscious. Just conscious in my thoughts. Maybe I was full of dope, not able to feel anything but able to think. That didn't explain the amnesia . . .

My eyes opened. I looked eagerly, but could see only formless blobs of very bright colors. I became aware of sounds, but they were garbled beyond recognition.

Sight and sound were two an-

chors into reality. I clung to them, and after a while I became aware of being feverish, hot. I was hurt, I thought.

I was sure of it a few moments later. I felt bandages being gently lifted from my head. With almost second sight I could sense sensitive probing of open wounds by someone capable. A doctor.

I heard deep throated voice sounds, so garbled that they made no sensible words. Fragmentary. Mixed up. Reversed and forward. I tried to straighten them out into words. They seemed to make some sort of sense just a millionth of an inch beyond my grasp.

They were like my name. If someone asked me, I would know. It was that close.

Then there were new sounds. Higher pitched, more familiar. I felt the emotion of gladness surge through me, yet somehow apart from me. Impersonal. Somewhere the word rose to stationary clarity.

Mama.

It startled me so much that I wondered why it should startle me at all. People usually have mothers, I said to myself jokingly. Then I realized the reason why it had startled me. But of course, psychologists always said that in unusual stress one returns to infancy. Even so—I felt vaguely uneasy.

" . . . quite a miracle," a deep

voice came with unheralded clarity. "No pulse nor respiration for four minutes. Then suddenly he started functioning again. He was dead. . ."

My mind seized and echoed the word. *Dead.*

"But wasn't course of he-course-wasn't-of-he wasn't it often happens in children under four years of age." The doctor's voice.

"But my baby is *alive!* *That's all that matters!*" That was mama.

Mama? But—

I couldn't remember anything at all, but I *knew* I wasn't a baby. I was a grown man.

The vague blobs my eyes brought me loomed larger. Something clarified. A face. A woman's face. I had never seen her before, but she seemed more than familiar to some corner of my mind. There were tears in her eyes, a sensitive smile hovering between happiness and crying.

"My *baby,*" she said. "My poor poor *baby.*"

Numbed, horrible recognition of the truth implied by her words overwhelmed me. It was true. Every sensation coming to my frozen mind confirmed it. I was a child. A baby of two or three years of age. But—even though I couldn't remember a thing about myself, I knew I was a grown man. I was an adult in every sense of the word. I was

suffering from amnesia. I was a two or three year old infant. I was a man. I was

"He must rest now, my dear," the deep voice said..

Rest . . . restrest . . . restrest . . .

The baby had died and I was in the baby. I had died and I was in the baby. I was the baby. It was twisted up somehow.

Something shoved into my mouth, and with a will of its own my mouth began a sucking action. Warm milk flowed down my throat.

I WOKE up and was aware I had been asleep. Asleep. Now things didn't seem so strange. I viewed them calmly.

Two things seemed undeniable. One, every sensory impression led me to the conviction that I was an infant. Two, every mental impression led me to the conviction that I was an adult.

Still, since I couldn't remember my name, nor any specific thing about my adult past, perhaps the mental impressions were illusion. Even as this thought formed, I knew it couldn't hold water. No infant could have the half formed but very definite thoughts, viewpoints, and questions that formed of themselves in my mind, demanding answers!

I had always been somewhat of an atheist. Life after death?

I had done a little mathematics with heaping all the skulls of everyone who had ever lived into one pile and making a heap bigger than the earth. I had done a little philosophizing on man's egocentricity as the basic drive for a belief in life after death. When, where, or as who, I had no idea.

Here I was. Not a disembodied soul, exactly. I had a body. Quite obviously, though, it was another body than the one I must have occupied to have gained all the pseudo-memories and viewpoints I so firmly possessed.

The doctor's words returned to me. The infant had died and then miraculously returned to life—at the same time I became aware of existing in the child. The thought disturbed me strangely, producing unformed presentiments and a host of unformed thoughts I was more than half afraid to explore. *Illegal* forced itself vaguely into my thoughts, with no connotations. It was a concept *in vacuo*; and as the days and months and years passed that *in vacuo* flavor of a thought was to be associated with many concepts and bits of knowledge. Ideas *in vacuo* were to become my only wedge into the mystery of my being, until—

But at this point, with no thought whatever of the future, I puzzled over the concept *illegal*.

It had flavors hidden in it. What law had I broken? Was the phenomenon of my being in this infant's body so common that there was a law against it? Or did the thought connect to something I had done in the life I couldn't remember. Had I been—a murderer? The question echoed dully, bringing no slightest flavor of response.

So I hadn't been a murderer.

Then in what way had I broken the law? A traffic violation? I had been killed in an accident? A plane accident? I followed the path of the thought eagerly until it dwindled off with no positive memories being revived. And by that time the original flavor of the concept *in vacuo* was completely lost.

My interests turned to physical impressions. They were now more vivid, less nebulous. Colors were still too vivid and bright, but at least they fitted clearly into well defined shapes. A room with sharp corners and flat walls. A face hovering over me that was strange, and definitely not the one that I remembered from before I had slept. A woman. Probably a nurse.

I turned to an exploration of my own body. My last doubts were dispelled. My hands and feet and torso were those of a two or three year old child. No emotional shock attended this positive confirmation of what I knew. It was a fact. I accepted

it. I accepted it because it didn't occur to me that there might be any other course. I was here, and now.

DURING the following week I became slowly acquainted with the general picture. My "name" was Donald Cook. My "mother" came every afternoon and stayed with me until eight in the evening, when the nurse shooed her out.

She and the doctor talked quite freely in front of me, not knowing that I could understand everything they talked about. I learned that Donald Cook had fallen off the porch onto a pile of rocks, and had been rushed to the hospital unconscious. From the doctor I learned that Donald had suffered a skull fracture, necessitating immediate surgery to remove bone pressure against the brain, that his heart had stopped beating. He had died. It had been at least four minutes before the doctor had been able to get the heart started. He had then finished the surgery on Donald's head.

But Donald had remained unconscious for two weeks after that. "Injury to brain tissue due to lack of blood during those four minutes of death," the doctor explained.

"Donald is so quiet and serious now," Donald's mother said, looking at me tenderly. "Just like an angel out of

Heaven."

On impulse I said, "I'm not your son Donald, Mrs. Cook. I'm —" I had difficulty forming the words with my baby mouth.

"Nonsense, Donald," she said. "Of course you are. Who else could you be?"

"But I'm not," I said. "I—I don't know who I am. You're not my mother."

I was shaking all over. No one would believe me. Some terrible accident had taken place, and these people refused to take it seriously.

Mrs. Cook looked alarmed. "He's talking like—a stranger!"

"Aftermath of that type of surgery," the doctor said to Mrs. Cook. "It happens often enough. I wouldn't be too concerned. It will wear off."

His words seared into my brain. *It happens often enough. I wouldn't be too concerned about it. It will wear off.* I was getting mixed up in the emotions generated by the infant mind. I knew that in my normal state I wouldn't cry. Rather, I would calmly try to prove to these people .

It was futile. Prove to them that Donald was really dead, and that I—who knew nothing about my past, or even my name—now resided in his place in this body?

The doctor had said it happens often enough. Was it, then, a fairly common occur-

rence? Were there large numbers of people in the world who had entered a body not theirs, after its native soul had departed in the belief that death had taken place?

"He'll be all right tomorrow, Mrs. Cook," the doctor said, giving me a warning glance. "I think it would be best for you to leave now. I'll give Donald something to relax him."

Mrs. Cook departed after kissing me tenderly. The doctor stayed until a nurse came. He issued orders for a sedative. The nurse and I were alone when she stuck the needle into my arm. The world around me was sharply detailed, sterilized, rigid and—inescapable.

The doctor. There was something about him I must remember. Something I ought to know.

The next day when Mrs. Cook came into the room I smiled up at her and said, "Hello, mother."

BY the time I was five the hospital was a dim memory. Two years of loving parental rationalization had produced a few results in the direction of sanity. I knew the psychological mumbo jumbo that "answered" the questions for which I longed with every fibre of my being to find true answers. Those "answers" made me unsure of my memories. I began to think perhaps my "parents" and others around me were right.

School quickly forced my mind the rest of the way into the mold. My "premature wisdom beyond my years" settled into the difficult task of keeping up with the other children my age in the learning of subjects which were as new to me as to them.

English. It came to me as a distinct shock why I was so slow with that subject. English was not my native tongue! My own language was as lost to me as my true name. Try as I might, I could remember no single word of it. I was only certain that it was not English.

Geography was familiar and yet strange. At every turn it hinted at things just beyond memory. And it was the subject in which I received the poorest grades. I was often convinced I was right on some detail of geography, only to have the teacher show me in the book that I was wrong.

Arithmetic came naturally. History, unlike geography, held little that affected me emotionally. It was not until I was in high school that the conclusion filtered up from my unconscious mind that the history being taught me was of a "later" period.

A "later" period. What a strange concept, hinting at unfocused feelings. It lay fallow in my mind along with many similar half formed thoughts until my late teens. Then, as though

the cosmos itself had been resting or marking time until the fourteenth year after my awakening in the hospital, things began to be different. I sensed it on my seventeenth birthday.

The sky seemed changed, as though a storm were threatened for tomorrow. A preternatural aura seemed to impregnate physical objects. The very tempo of the universe seemed at the same time to be rushing madly toward some very near future point, and to be hanging suspended and unmoving between the infinite past and the infinite future.

I was moving toward—what? I looked into the heavens in the daytime, into the blue depths beyond the freshly bleached clouds and sensed the answer there; I saw it in the darkness between the stars at night. It was in the bright red eyes of a spider that paused to look up at me, in the flashing green irises of a cat that paused in the mouth of an alley before scurrying away. The answer was everywhere, just beyond reach.

Yet it was there, and that thought gave me a feeling of exhilaration, for I was sure that tomorrow, or next week, or very soon, I would know who I was.

Yes, to learn who I was had become an obsession with me. My name might add nothing to my knowledge. My name might be Poy Gorad or Ghe Aoah or Xlu Faluostila or John Jones,

and bring with it nothing to brush away the cobwebs that veiled my past. Or my name might be the key that unlocked the doors of memory.

I repeat, I was moving toward—what? When it came it was contained in a small slip of paper mailed to Mr. Cook, my physical parent. It was from the school board, requesting that I be taken to the clinic for psychiatric treatment. Symptoms; constant daydreaming which is considered a schizoid symptom, tendency to argue with the teachers and insist the textbooks are wrong, etc., etc.

Psychiatric treatment! I wasn't afraid of being considered insane, because according to the standards of current society I had long ago recognized that I was insane. Then what made me so afraid? Fear of being sent to a mental hospital where I might be confined indefinitely against my will? Perhaps, but not entirely.

Fear of exposure. That was it. Psychiatrists were an Unknown. Certainly any psychiatrist who held an open mind toward his specialty must know that there are things that can't be explained by pat tags. So far, no one in the world knew about me.

When the moment came that my true past became unveiled, I wanted to be a lone observer, able to decide by myself what

my future would be like. I wanted no psychiatrist penetrating the veil at the same time I did—or even before I did, with his trained perception.

Mr. Cook showed me the slip of paper listing the appointment date, and also the letter that accompanied it. "What seems to be the trouble, son," he said. "You know I stand ready to do anything in my power."

"I know, dad," I said. He had always called me son rather than Donald—largely because he sensed what I had never said since early childhood. I called him dad because I understood his quiet unhappiness.

"What is it?" he repeated.

"Nothing, dad," I said. "Nothing anyone would understand. Sure I daydream in classes, if they want to call it that. I'm thinking. As for arguing with the teachers, they don't know their subjects and resent anything that takes them out of the printed text. To them the textbook is the final authority."

Mr. Cook smiled. "It has to be, doesn't it?" he asked. "After all, school is for learning certain subjects and passing tests on them. After college will be time enough for you to question authority, and maybe make a name for yourself with new theories." He saw my headshake and frowned. "What were you arguing with them about?"

I shrugged. "In history, the

causes of various wars. In English, the origin of various words. In arithmetic—"

"Even in arithmetic?" Mr. Cook said sadly.

"Even in arithmetic," I said, seeing the fragile cord of sympathy pull apart.

"But it shows he has an interest," Mrs. Cook sided with me. "I think the teachers are wrong not to encourage him."

"There are other things to school than getting the right answers," Mr. Cook said. "This is Tuesday. The appointment is for four o'clock Friday. I'll get off from the office and we'll go with him to the doctor."

Three days. At school the next day I forced myself to study the classrooms, the teachers, the other students. What was this all about? It was senseless and unreal. Adults working at a job for a living, with their interests elsewhere. Kids grooving their minds with things of no importance to anyone; misinterpreted facts, falsehoods presented as truths, clumsy methods presented as Only Methods. It was a school designed to kill curiosity, ignore logic, accept absurdity, deny common sense. It was—I searched for an analogy—it was a sign painters' school where letters spelling out VACANCY were splashed crudely over the Rembrandts of unfolding reality, and the students were graded on the neatness of the letters

they painted, while the masterpiece they covered up was ignored.

To them -I was an introvert, unsocial. I was to be forced into the mold of conformity by a psychiatrist whose criterion of improvement would be my degree of future conformity.

Suddenly I knew what I had to do. Escape. Run away from home. I had to face life on my own terms—not surrender. Surrender was impossible.

With the realization of what I must do came automatic action. I raised my hand to be excused from the room. Instead of going to the lavatory I left the building. This was Wednesday. Mrs. Cook would be at her club meeting, the house would be empty. I went home and emptied my bank of its sixty-three dollars and seventy-six cents. I left a note.

"Dear mother and dad," I wrote. "Don't worry about me. I will be all right. I will come back to see you some day when everything is all right. Your loving son, Donald."

I stared at the signature, wondering where the real Donald was, whose body was my habitation. There were tears in my eyes, for him, for his parents who thought me their son. I didn't want to leave this haven that had been my home for so long.

Then slowly, while I sat

there, the pen still in my hand, the realization formed within my thoughts that this was not tragedy. It was a step that had been forced on me because I was ready for it. I had been given a haven until my wings were strong enough to bear me. I was being pushed from the nest by hidden forces that were loving and kind.

Without further hesitation I left the house and caught a bus to the depot. Soon I was on a train, the countryside speeding past me, my destination Chicago where I could become lost in anonymity.

THE immensity of a large city! Tides of humanity flowing one way at dawn, the other way at dusk. Stacks of cubicles adorned externally with materialized dirt stained architectural beauty, dead inside and without a soul—until the magic hour of morning brings humanity spilling from the elevators into the elevators, and makes of the dark cubicles places of light and dynamic life. Life that at dusk abruptly retreats the way it had come as though driven by some invisible moon, to leave once more soulless the cubicles, abandoned the vertical arteries, the elevators, and aimless the empty derelicts that are elevated trains at night.

For three days I abandoned my soul to absorbing the feel

of the city, marveling at its cosmic tides, its unkempt order, its inexorable momentum. Things stirred in the dark depths of memory, and I sensed their stirring, but could not bring them to the surface.

Had I been in Chicago before? I searched around corners before I reached them, hoping to remember some definite thing. I visited many different neighborhoods systematically, guided by city maps, hoping to turn some corner onto some new street—and suddenly see the familiar unfold ahead of me.

But after three days I became certain of two things. One, I had been in big cities, many of them, in that life I couldn't remember. Two, I had never before been in Chicago.

It was both disappointing and encouraging to know this. Disappointing because the end of the trail seemed farther away than ever before. Encouraging because it gave me new confidence in the honesty of my mind. I had *wanted* to find something to believe—enough so to have deluded myself—but not once had I caught myself trying to conjure false memories.

And so I turned my thoughts to more immediate problems. It was late afternoon of the third day. I went into a large cafeteria under the shadow of the elevated tracks and collected food on a tray for my evening

meal, searched for a vacant table but, finding none, chose one occupied by a woman whom I gave only half a glance.

While I ate I counted what money I had left. Two dollars and a few cents. My room rent was paid for four more days, but in the morning I would have to find work.

"Almost broke, eh, Donny boy?"

I looked up, startled. It was the woman sitting across from me at the table who had spoken. "Why—no," I said. I decided to put on the teenage act. Grinning, I added, "Just wondering if my week's allowance will last out."

"You think I don't know you," she said, her dark eyes glinting. "You're Donald Cook. I know you. What are you doing in Chicago?"

"You're crazy," I said, filled with alarm. "I never saw you before in my life!"

"*This* life, you mean, eh?" she said, chuckling.

I was noticing details about her now. Her hair was black, but an almost invisible white fuzz covered her face. She seemed foreign, though she had no accent and her clothing was conventional. Her teeth were firm and white, her cheekbones high under her eyes.

I pretended to ignore her, while my heart pounded so wildly that I was afraid people

at other tables would hear it.

"Hiding your head in the sand like an ostrich," she taunted. "Can't blame you though."

A reaction was growing in me. Terror and disgust. I became aware of the woman's sagging breasts under her dress. The glitter in her dark eyes took on the aura of mocking Evil. I became aware of Sex in an unholy shape and my stomach, filled with cheap unpalatable food, churned into foam.

"You aren't *really* Donald Cook though, are you," she went on, her voice softly shrill and mocking, knowing. "You're one of *Them*. Think I don't know when I see it? One of *Them*!" Her laughter was hardly more than a whisper, but it seemed to my heightened senses to be deafening; rebounding from all sides in mocking echoes.

I fled, feeling every eye in the cafeteria following me. Her mocking laughter clung to my ears. And the almost deserted street as I emerged from the bright lights of the cafeteria seemed a haunted canyon. I fled along it, feeling like some dumb creature forced along a narrow chute toward the impersonal ax of the Slaughterer.

If I slept that night, in my cheap creaky bed, I was unaware of it. The radiator a few feet away hissed and spat in the darkness. I huddled under

the skimpy blanket and patched sheet, shivering—not from the cold of autumn weather, but a chill from outer space or deepest hell, carried on the still vivid memory of cackling laughter.

Homesickness flooded in upon me. Mr. and Mrs. Cook became mom and dad, the role I had denied them all my life. Alone in the darkness I cried unashamedly, wishing I were only Donald Cook and nothing more. Finally the tears ended. My emotions were spent, my mind cleared of conflict as the atmosphere and fields are cleared and fresh after a rain.

And hanging suspended in this cleared atmosphere of consciousness was a single thought, a question, unanswered.

All my life I had yearned for the answer to my identity; *but why, when it was within my grasp, had I fled from it, to hide in fear and trembling? Who were—they?*

I sent out mental antennae, searching, pleading for contact. I found—nothing. Blankness.

Suddenly it was noon and I was awake. Outside my window were the noises of city traffic, softly muffled. I raised the torn blind. The first snow of winter had fallen during the night.

Two hours later I got my first job, washing dishes in an incredibly unsanitary cafe. No questions were asked of me, no curiosity shown toward me. It

was only later that I realized my reason for keeping the job all winter. It was a refuge from the Unknown. I was in hiding. Not from my physical parents or the school psychiatrist, but from the cackling laughter of a witch who knew who I was.

IT was during that winter that I found the book *Evli* in the public library. Old, with a new hardback cover placed on it by the repair shop of the library system, and with the title page gone, there was no way of discovering the name of the author.

It was the story of two souls in successive reincarnations, the pattern of their lives repeated, incarnation after incarnation. The pattern was one of frustration. Life after life they met, recognized each other in casual but predestined passing; instant rebirth of the eternal love that held them together, but in each life they failed to meet long enough to bring that love to fruition—until *Evli*'s next to last incarnation which was in Italy. That time, running for his life from men who were going to kill him, he encountered his love for the first time in that life. There was instant recognition between them. Without hesitation he seized her hand, drew her to him and kissed her—and in the next moment doom in the form of assassins swooped down upon

them. The closing chapter saw *Evli* in his final incarnation, in India, a child with a peculiar scar on his forehead. He was at peace with life.

It was a beautifully written story, though it struck me as being far short of what it could have been. As a seventeen year old I couldn't quite see it. To go through perhaps thousands of years of successive incarnations toward a few moments of ecstasy snatched from life before death closes in again? And then to have no desire to find one's Great Love again, but be ready for Nirvana?

Evli fell short as a story. But after the first couple of chapters I wasn't reading it as a story. I was reading it as a textbook. And I read it again and again.

Evli had incarnated each time in search of his loved one. The girl had incarnated in search of her lover.

For fourteen years I had been obsessed with the desire to find out *who* I was. Now, suddenly, my view shifted. It became less important to remember my past existence. The question that began to burn within me for an answer was—*WHY?*

Was I here in this life to do something? I searched the dark wells of thought for an echo—in vain. I began to read the newspapers and be interested in world events. Was I to become

President? Be the leader of some great new religion that would replace Christianity? A dozen ideas appealed to me. I dreamed great dreams.

And in every great daydream I created there were unseen forces smoothing the way. *Them*. I was one of *them*. *They* took care of the witches who cackled madly.

I would rise from this cockroach infested kitchen thick with the smell of ancient grease and cheap soap, my barren room in a cheap hotel where male and female derelicts drank themselves into mental stupor with cheap wine and slept together, trying to forget.

Spring came. I couldn't recall having particularly noticed spring in other years. There was a tree along the route I walked from the hotel to the cafe where I worked. I watched the formation of buds that burst to become small leaves which perceptibly enlarged until they were a veil of green lace.

My soul expanded, encompassing Chicago, extending out into the countryside. I contained it all within me. It was a part of me. I, a dishwasher in Joe's Cafe. It was good. It was wonderful. Poor Joe. He could never know. Let him glory in his belief that he was boss. Let him think he was doing me a favor every Wednesday when he gave me my weekly ten dollars. I

laughed within myself, knowing that I stretched back in time to a beginning long before Chicago. I, like Evli, had existed down through the centuries. Of course I had. I had no memory of them, but I did have the memory of awaking in the body of a baby. The rest followed.

I had even more proof. The very geography of the Earth had altered from what I remembered it. I had existed before Chicago? I had existed before the land upon which Chicago rested had risen from the waters that stretched from the Gulf of Mexico into Canada! I had lived when the great continent of the Pacific had sunk deep into the ocean, leaving a huge hole into which the waters rushed, draining off from the very ground where I now walked, rushing toward the gulf. Was it any wonder I had argued with my schoolteachers about theories of absurd glaciers stretching almost to the equator when I *knew*? Yes, I knew. Fragments.

And I was here to do something. And I was one of *them*. They were around me, waiting, while I *developed*. And I was developing. I could feel cosmic power latent within me.

Power. I toyed with the idea of using it to blast a deep chasm in the vacant lot I used as a short cut every day. I entertained the idea of using it to give sight to Mrs. Kre-

mona who sold newspapers in front of Joe's Cafe. It would be nice to slip up quietly, touch her, let cosmic power flow from my finger into her, healing her, then slip unnoticed into the cafe and start washing dishes while everyone gathered round her, marveling, and wondering who had performed this great miracle.

Suddenly—Karen was in my life. Soft brown eyes and dark hair, long clean legs in bluejeans. She had been running, looking back over her shoulder at three other girls who were chasing her, calling in taunting tones to them. She was running directly at me. I stopped, not sure which way to jump to keep her from running into me. And then she turned her head and saw me. She stopped. Her eyes became large and round, looking directly into mine.

A strange tightness gripped my chest. A strange warmth flowed through me. Some invisible hand seemed pushing me toward her, but I was unable to move. Or breathe.

The three girls came running up, one of them shouting, "Now we've caught you!" But Karen didn't hear them, and after a few seconds of uncomfortable puzzlement on their part they moved on, leaving us alone.

"Hello," she said, finally.

"Hello." I groped for something else to say.

"I'm Karen," she said.

"I know." It slipped out, and it

wasn't exactly true. I hadn't known her name, but when I had heard it I knew that of course her name had to be Karen. Nothing else would fit her.

Her eyes never left mine. She said slowly, wonderingly, "I believe you do!" Abruptly her mood changed. Her eyes withdrew. She giggled. She put her hand against my chest and gave me a little push. "You make me feel so *funny*!" she said. "What's your name?"

Cold shock bathed me at this abrupt change. Then I realized it was a mask of conventionality to hide her sudden shyness. I matched it clumsily.

"Who you think you're shovin'?" I growled, grabbing her head and mussing her hair, then letting her go.

"You stop that," she said, smoothing her hair with one hand.

"Guess what my name is," I suggested.

She wrinkled her nose at me. "Tell me," she said, "and I'll let you buy me a soda."

Consciousness of my winter's savings in the billfold in my hip pocket swelled me with pride. "Of course I'll buy you a soda," I said. I took her hand and held it tight as we started walking toward the drugstore half a block away.

She walked beside me, breathless, her eyes sparkling. After a few steps she said, "You haven't told me your name yet."

I grinned at her. "Would it be—Donald?" I asked.

She frowned as though mentally flavoring the word. "N-no," she said. "It might be, but somehow . . ."

"It doesn't fit me?" I filled in her thought.

She nodded gravely, and unconsciously we had slowed our pace to a minimum. "That's right."

"What does fit me?" I asked. I intended the question to be half humorous, half taunting, but it was gravely serious. I thought of Evli and his love. A giddy boldness possessed me. "Gimme a kiss," I said.

"Don't change the subject," she said absently, and I was squelched. "I—I don't know what does fit you," Karen said. "I seem to almost get it, and then I lose it. Is your name Donald?" She stopped walking and half turned toward me. Our lips brushed together lightly in a kiss that we kept utterly casual but which rocked the very foundations of our universe.

We had resumed walking and I said with a hint of knowing a secret, "Mr. and Mrs. Cook insist that my name is Donald."

"Who are they?"

"My parents—I guess." My hair was pounding.

"My parents asked me what my name was, and I told them," Karen said.

What was my name? Now, if someone would ask me, it might slip out. They'd say, "What's your name?" and I would say, "Why, it's—" The past, so remote now

and yet so vivid, settled over me. No one *had* asked me . . .

"But if no one asked you," Karen was saying brightly, "I can see why they might want to call you Donald. Okay, I'll call you Donny."

I thought of the witch. "No!" I said sharply. Then hastily, "Why not just call me Don?"

"All right, Don. Here's the drug-store."

I was two hours late for work. "Whatsa idear of bein' so late?" Joe demanded, but I went past him without answering, put on my apron, and began on the stack of dirty dishes. "How dya like that!" Joe said loudly to Bill, the cook. "The squirt must be in love! Look! His feet are a foot off the floor!" I ignored their lewd laughter and continued washing dishes.

Later, Karen came into the cafe and sat at the counter. I couldn't see her from where the sink was, but I knew she had come in. I opened the swinging doors and looked out. She looked up at me and smiled brightly. I nodded and returned to the sink. It was enough for her to be out there, and for me to be in here. We were happy to be only a few feet away from each other.

Then suddenly something possessed me. I wiped my hands and went out in front. "Hi, Karen," I said casually, draping myself against the counter in front of her. Out of the corner of my eye

I saw Joe descending on me. I waited until he reached me, then turned to him. "Joe," I said, "this is Karen."

"Sure. Karen. Glad to know you, Karen. Now whatsa idear, squirt—"

"Look, Joe," I said, brushing his words aside coldly. "Karen is going to come in here. Lots. She's to have anything she wants. Understand? And she doesn't get charged for it, see? It's on the house."

He blinked. Then he grinned. "Okay by me," he said, a knowing look in his eyes that said, *So this is the girl he's in love with!* "I just keep track and take it off your wages."

"Oh no you don't!" I said, surprised at the fierceness in my tone. "She gets what she wants—on the house. I don't pay, *she* don't pay."

He looked down at my hands and I became aware my fists were doubled. "Okay, squirt," he said placatingly. He grinned suddenly at Karen and added, "Only, don't make it too often. Squirt has to get the work out." There was only friendliness and respect in his tone.

After a minute I returned to the kitchen. When Karen left I went out and said, "Look, Joe, I'm sorry. You just made me sore. You can keep track and take it off my ten bucks."

"No, that's all right," he said. "We do what you say. You got

some rights too, you know. Only get back to the kitchen. You been out here too much today and you was late this morning." He waited until I was at the door to the kitchen, then called, "Hey, squirt!" When I turned he grinned. "She's a nice girl." It was sincere.

I stumbled through the door into the kitchen, deliriously happy. I didn't know why, only—I would have worked for Joe for nothing after that.

KAREN was waiting outside for me when I got through work. She was strangely quiet as she fell into step beside me. "What's the matter?" I asked jokingly. "You act like you're married to me."

"I am," she said, not smiling. "I feel it. We've been married for a long long time. I know it."

"You're only fifteen," I said.

"You're only seventeen." Her hand slipped into mine. "I've been thinking all day. You're going to do something, Don. I know it. And I'm here to be with you until you have done it. Then we are to go away together."

"Sure I'm going to do something," I said. "I'm going to be a great man some day."

"Of course, Don." She pulled my arm around her waist and walked close beside me. I could feel her trembling.

I began to talk. We walked aimlessly, turning corners from time to time. I told her everything from

my first awareness in this life to the cackling witch who knew who I was. I told her my feelings, my thoughts. I told her about Joe saying it would be okay for her to come in any time and order anything she wanted.

"Do you think Joe is—one of us?" she asked.

The thought startled me. Was he? "N-no," I decided aloud. "He's just a man."

"But aren't you?" Karen asked. "If we lived before this life, it seems that everyone must ."

"I don't know," I said. "Somehow I don't think so. What I mean is . . . How can I put it into words? The human race is so big. It's a sea of souls, a gigantic herd being driven through time to green pastures. And there has to be cowpunchers," I finished lamely.

"That's it!" she said, her eyes shining with soft brown fires. "I've seen them in Westerns. The herd is going through a mountain pass, and the cowpunchers scout ahead, finding the way, and where they find a side passage leading to a dead end or a cliff the herd might rush over to destruction, they leave a cowpuncher to keep the herd from going the wrong way."

"Yeah," I said. "That's one thing they do." But it hadn't led to what I intended. The herd of cattle didn't provide the analogy I wanted. Cattle were driven or prevented. The picture I had was of leading while the group fol-

lowed. I explained this to Karen. She said, "Of course, Don. I see what you mean." Her tone was careful. She preferred the first analogy.

For the first time in hours I became aware of things around us. It was dark. The streets were deserted. I looked at my wristwatch under a streetlight. It was almost midnight. "I'd better take you home," I said.

"No." Her statement was matter-of-fact. "If I went home I'd be in dutch. I'll just show up at home tomorrow after you go to work, like I had gotten up early and gone out to play. They'll never know the difference that way."

"But we can't walk all—"

"I'm going to sleep with you, Don. In your room. We're man and wife. And—there's another reason." She was trembling under my encircling arm again.

Sudden'y I was afraid. I too was trembling. We didn't talk any more as we turned in the direction of the hotel.

Over us the darkness crept down and thickened, forming the walls and arched roof of a tunnel. The city was gone. The world was gone. There was only the tunnel, and no escape, no turning back the way we had come.

Where had I been in such a tunnel before? The night I had fled from the witch. But now I wasn't alone. Karen walked beside me. My wife.

My wife. And yet I had met her

only eighteen hours ago!

I thought of Evli

MORNING came. Even before I opened my eyes I was aware of her in my arms. I opened my eyes a fraction of an instant before hers opened. It was the ten millionth time we had awakened thus. We looked into each other's eyes and laughed happily.

An hour later we left the hotel and walked slowly, side by side, on the route I always took to go to work. We came to the spot where we had met the day before. We paused and looked at each other; then, by common consent, went toward the drugstore where we had had a soda together. It was an anniversary. We had been together now for one eternity.

"Gad!" the aged druggist groaned. "How can you *kids* stomach an ice cream soda almost before breakfast?"

Karen and I drank the depths of merriment in each other's eyes and laughed in our inner thoughts. *The poor doddering infant*. After the sodas we continued on to the cafe. Karen came in with me and we had a breakfast of oatmeal and cream, toast, and coffee. Joe served it to us matter-of-factly. Afterward I brushed Karen's lips with mine, casually possessive, and she left. I went to the kitchen . . .

I whistled while I worked. Soap bubbles rose in the dishwater, and they were flawless jewels reflect-

ing the lights of a million stars. *It's good to be alive, to be living*, I thought. With movements that had long ago become automatic, I transformed stacks of dirty dishes into neat piles of clean ones. The silverware clicked into boxes, ready to be taken out and placed behind the counter.

Happiness is an inadequate word, sometimes. I was happy. I was home. Joe's Cafe. It was Karen's home, too. During the night she had told me a little about her family. Eight brothers and sisters in a four room flat, a mother that drank, a father that played the horses. She needed the extra food she would get here, that I would provide. It was understandable now why she wouldn't be missed if she didn't go home. Somehow I was going to take her away from all that even though she were only fifteen. Even though I were only seventeen and made only ten bucks a week. We'd slip over into Indiana and get married, lying about our ages. I had over sixty dollars in my hip pocket, saved out of my wages during the winter. We'd work it out together.

Joe came into the kitchen and took out the silverware boxes. He looked at me in a funny way, but didn't say anything. Later when I carried a stack of plates out he followed me back to the kitchen. "I wanna get somethin' straight, squirt," he said. "Maybe you told me your name when you started

here last fall. I forget. It don't make no difference, but just for the books your name is Fred Brown. Got it? Maybe it ain't, but I had to give you a name today. Some big guy came in asking what the name of the dishwasher was. I had to tell him something." He winked at me.

"Okay," I said, fighting the cold chill that shot through me. "Big guy? What'd he look like?"

"I don't know. Not police. He asked me if I had a kid working in the kitchen by the name of Donald Cook. I told him no, it was Fred Brown. Son of an old friend of mine."

I turned my back on Joe quickly and started washing dishes. I could feel him standing there, looking at my back.

"It was about fifteen minutes ago, squirt," Joe said thoughtfully. "He *might* have been a cop. If your girl friend stayed with you last night it's none of my business, but she might have been missed at home and when she got home this morning they might have ." His voice drifted off.

I hadn't thought of that. Karen was in trouble. They'd put her in a girls' school and brand her as a child delinquent.

"Want to take a couple hours off and find out?" Joe offered.

I didn't know where she lived. She had neglected to tell me. I hadn't asked.

"Naw," I said very carefully. "It couldn't be anything." But I

knew my face was very pale. Joe could see I was lying. Then—

"The service here is very terrible, I *must* say."

Joe and I turned toward the door from the front. Karen was standing there, an impudent twinkle in her brown eyes. Joe darted me a glance that said to play it silent.

"I'm sorry, ma'am," he said. "Guess I'll have to fire that waiter. I'll take care of you personally, ma'am." They moved out front.

I gripped the edge of the sink and fought the trembling, a mixture of relief that it hadn't been Karen, and knowing what it must be. The school must have convinced Mr. and Mrs. Cook that I needed psychiatric help, or they wouldn't have tried to find me. They'd have let me work it out myself. Especially Mr. Cook. Maybe I was only seventeen, but I was old enough to know that the only way someone could come in and ask if Donald Cook worked here was to have seen me and followed me here. Maybe the cop had identified me from a picture he had. Joe's pat story might fool him. Especially that "son of an old friend" business. And maybe not.

If it weren't for Karen I could walk out at once and go to Detroit or New York. I had been half thinking of such a thing before Karen showed up.

It hit me with surprise that it had only been two days ago that I had been thinking of quitting.

Another thought struck me. Maybe it had been about Karen. I had to find out. I wiped my hands and went out front, sliding onto the stool beside Karen with a cup of coffee.

"How'd things go at home?" I asked out of the corner of my mouth.

"Maybe they knew I wasn't home and maybe they didn't," she said. "Mom gave me a funny look when I came in, and asked me when I was going to get a job and find some girls to live with somewhere so it wouldn't be so crowded. But she asks that every once in a while, so maybe it didn't mean anything. She probably wouldn't care if she knew."

"Oh," I said. I made up my mind. "Be outside when I get through work. We've got some talking to do." I slid off the stool and went back to the kitchen.

I washed dishes, fighting the panic that had taken possession of me. Cops. Maybe the big guy would be waiting for me outside. Maybe the place was surrounded. Cops didn't care what I might feel. They'd say, "We just have our job to do, son. We have to ship you back home." Maybe they'd add, "It's for your own good."

I was jerked back to awareness of my surroundings. Joe was bringing a guy into the kitchen. Fear paralyzed me, then I realized this newcomer couldn't be police. He needed a shave, was hollow chested, a wino or I had never seen

one. I remembered what I had picked up when I started to work last fall. Until I came, the only dishwashers Joe could get were winos after a little dough to get drunk on.

My fear changed to dismay. Joe was firing me because he didn't want the cops around. Then I realized my reaction was silly, because I had already made up my mind Karen and I would have to go someplace.

Joe paid no attention to me. He said to the wino, "There's the sink. Get busy. Eight bucks a week and meals, and you gotta work a full week or you don't get nothin' but your meals. Take it or leave it."

"I gotta have a little dough for my doctor," the wino pleaded. "I'm ill, and under a doctor's care."

Joe looked at me then, brushing off the wino's pleas by ignoring him. "Come out front, squirt," he said gruffly. When we went through the door he said in a low voice, "Go up front and look across the street. That's the guy."

I saw him, leaning against a light standard and reading a newspaper. I had never seen him before, but he had that smooth inflexible calm of a plain clothes officer. I turned away. Joe was pouring a cup of coffee. He nodded toward the end stool at the back and set the coffee there. I went back and sat down. There were customers, but they might as well not have been there. They paid no attention to what was going on.

Joe rang up the cash register. He lifted money out carefully and closed it again. He came back and shoved it across to me. "Your pay," he said.

I counted it. Four dollars and twenty-nine cents. Three days' pay. That was all I had coming. But God! He could have given me a little more, or maybe made it four thirty even.

"Okay?" he said.

I nodded and put it in my pocket.

"That's business," Joe said. "Now. You need dough." I stared unbelieving as he pulled out a thick clip of folded currency. He took off the clip and undoubled it, exposing the fact that there were several hundred dollars in the wad. I watched him count out two hundred dollars. He put the rest back in his pocket and then counted the two hundred again.

"Here," he said, shoving it across the counter. "Pay me back when you grow up."

I shook my head. "I've got money," I said.

"Take it and shut up," Joe said so softly it couldn't be heard three feet away. "Go down the alley and out through the beer joint on the back street. I told Karen to meet you at the Greyhound. It'll be okay there unless you killed somebody."

Something was making it hard for me to see very well. Joe was smiling a little. "Come back and see me sometime," he said.

For a long second we looked at

each other. I took the money and put it in my pocket and went out through the kitchen. In the alley as I went toward the back door of the beer joint I thought of my grandiose dreams of leading humanity and felt pretty humble. There had been another Joe, long ago. Maybe that Joe had believed Mary's story, or maybe not. But to the Joes of the world it's okay. God must have known that, to pick the wife of one to bear the Savior. Joe's Cafe

Karen was waiting for me at the Greyhound depot. She had a cheap suitcase and a brown zipper bag. "Joe told me," she said. "I went home and got all my things. Told mom I was finally taking her advice. Where are we going?"

"Good girl," I said, squeezing her hand. "Joe gave me two hundred bucks. Told me to pay it back when I grow up." I laughed softly. For some reason Karen didn't think it funny. She shivered and looked around the waiting room. "What's the matter?" I asked. I looked around too. There were people coming up the escalators from the lower levels. Passengers from busses, I decided. And my heart stopped beating.

Mr. and Mrs. Cook were in the group. They hadn't seen me yet. I took Karen's two bags and muttered, "Come on!"

"What's the matter, Don?" she asked.

I didn't answer. I saw her catch up with me out of the corner of

my eye as I hurried toward the exit. Then:

"Donald!" It was Mrs. Cook's voice. It tore at my heart with its contained agony and heartbreak.

"Someone's calling you," Karen whispered.

"Mrs. Cook," I said. "Hurry up."

We made it out the door. We lost ourselves in the noon hour sidewalk crowd. After a block it became reasonably certain we had escaped. I began to relax.

Karen put her hand on my arm. "Poor Don," she said.

"What d'ya mean, poor Don," I said angrily.

We walked several more blocks, with me looking straight ahead and Karen walking beside me. Finally I said, "We might as well have some lunch and figure things out." Just ahead was a cafeteria. When we entered, it looked familiar. Suddenly I remembered it, and stopped. It was here I had met the old witch.

It wasn't likely she would be here right at this moment, though, so I went on in, with Karen beside me. "Let's find a table," I said. "You can sit there and guard the suitcases while I get us some food." We started searching the crowded tables for one that was vacant. And suddenly I saw her. It was the witch. She hadn't seen me yet, but she would in a moment. I felt it.

"Let's get out of here," I said to Karen. "That woman over there."

She didn't question me. She

followed me out to the sidewalk. I looked back through the windows and saw the witch's eyes on me. She was smiling, a mocking and almost triumphant glint in her eyes, but she made no move to follow me.

I turned away, fighting the feeling of being trapped, almost—I caught my breath in surprise over the word—maneuvered. That was it—maneuvered. But that was absurd. Still—

The man Joe had called the big guy was at the corner ahead of us. There was no mistaking him. He was buying a paper at the sidewalk newsstand. It was mad. Unreal. He wasn't looking this way. He seemed to be almost intentionally not looking this way. But it would be impossible for us to continue on to the corner without his turning and seeing us.

I glared up into the sky and gritted through my teeth, "Good God! *Which way must I go?*"

"Let's go down this alley," Karen said, touching my arm.

I blinked at the alley entrance. I hadn't noticed it. It too was utterly mad. It was too handy, too open an avenue of escape. "No!" I said. I turned to go back toward the cafeteria.

The witch was strolling toward me. Her shape was ungainly. She waddled. But fear froze my blood.

The cop in one direction, the witch in the other, and the alley. Such a nice alley. So smoothly paved, so empty of garbage and

parked trucks. We could run its entire length to State Street with our eyes closed, and not run into anything.

State Street at the other end. People. The people were thick there. Too thick. The sidewalk was crowded with them. But they weren't moving. They were crowded together and all had their backs to me. That was mad too.

But there was no time to hesitate. "All right," I groaned. Karen and I entered the alley, walking swiftly, close together. Half way through I looked back. The witch was waddling after us with no haste, not even seeming to look at us. And behind her, at the street we had just left, stood the cop, the big boy, where he had paused to open his paper to an inside page. Freakishly the front page flashed at me and I saw the headlines. **PRESIDENT ARRIVES.** The two words etched themselves in my mind. I looked forward again without having missed my stride. The meaning of the crowd became obvious to me now. And to clinch it came the faint distant sound of a million sirens approaching. The President was coming down State Street.

"That must be the President," Karen said. "We'll get to see him."

I began to laugh softly. It was so mad, so insane, so unreal.

We were fifty feet from the mouth of the alley now. Just ahead, up above, was the second floor platform of a fire escape,

the grill floor half revealing a crouched figure hidden there. It was only some building employee waiting to see the President go by. Or was it?

Karen hadn't seen. She was looking eagerly toward the street, trying to see over the heads in the crowd.

Without looking up too obviously, I studied the setup of the fire escape. There was a steel ladder designed to slide down to the alley pavement, but its bottom rung was too high to reach by jumping. There was no way of getting up there, let alone getting up there without whoever was hidden there knowing it.

Karen and I reached the edge of the crowd. Idly, as though not thinking, I glanced back into the alley. The witch was still waddling toward us. The cop was hurrying up behind her. He had seen me now and was coming after me.

And over the edge of the fire escape platform a face was looking at me—and past me into the street. A face, and a hand with something in it. The tense evil excitement on the face told the story of what was held in that hand.

Like screaming demons from hell the motorcycle phalanxes swept in mathematical rows past the alley, moving so slowly, oh so slowly. And yet so swiftly that there wouldn't be time for anything. I saw the open top automobile with the President standing in it, erect, an aura of blue and

white power surrounding him. He was smiling and dipping his head, first at one side of the street, then at the other as the car moved with the stately slowness of a target in a shooting gallery. Ten feet more and the car would be even with the alley.

Karen said something which I didn't hear clearly. I nodded as though I understood and agreed. I could leap through the crowd into the street—but not in time to stop the President's car. If I were wrong about that figure on the fire escape—I turned my head and looked up. The man was standing, his arm pulled back for the toss.

I looked down into Karen's eyes and saw them go stark with fear as I sucked in a sobbing breath. Then I was spilling through the crowd, bumping into people, pushing them aside, striking a woman who tried to grasp at me indignantly and seeing her shocked unbelief of what had happened to her.

Some unnatural sensory organ came to life and made me aware of the grenade that was arching in slow motion from that fire escape platform in the alley, aware that its thrower had now seen me, but too late to clutch back the thing he had hurled.

I burst out of the crowd. There were screams behind me. The President was looking directly at me, startled. Beside him the Mayor of Chicago had half risen from his seat.

Words were screaming from my lungs but I had no idea what I was trying to say. And above me, still just a little way behind me, the grenade was lazily sailing in a slow accurate arc.

Something unbelievably hot drew a line across my chest. I heard a sharp pop above the scream of the sirens. There was a car following that of the President and a man in it was standing, aiming a gun at me again. Aiming carefully this time.

I laughed. He would miss. He had to miss. And something slammed against me, throwing me off balance. I wouldn't be able to reach the President's car. Not in time. The grenade was almost over my head. I didn't see it with my eyes, but I knew exactly where it was.

Without having time for thought I changed my plan. I leaped into the air, twisting as I leaped so that I was off the pavement when I faced toward the grenade. My arm stretched up. My fingers closed over the waffle grill surface of the fist sized grenade. I was falling back, but I had it. I had it.

I caressed it and cupped it between the palms of my hands, then pulled it against my stomach and rolled over on it. I was laughing softly, my lips half pressed against the pavement, my eyes wide open, wary lest some fool try at the last instant—

"Judas!"

The sound snapped me back into

the world. "Yes?" I said, opening my eyes.

"God! The poor guy can crack wise at a time like this!" the President said, marveling. "It's *all right*, son. I know you saved my life. That idiot of . . ."

"I thought he was going to try to kill you!" an agonized face said angrily. "Where are the doctors? I'll give my blood, my organs, my life, to save him. Where are the doctors?" It was nerves. He didn't mean it. And if he hadn't shot me—I could see that now—I would have reached the car but I couldn't have taken the full explosive charge into my body. What had happened was the only safe way it could have happened—for the President.

I turned my head, my eyes searching. Karen's face swam before me. "Karen!" I said, and tried to reach toward her with a hand that wouldn't move—wouldn't move? My hands had cupped the grenade

Her tear stained face grew larger and clearer. She had sunk down beside me. Her hands hovered over either side of my face, not daring to touch me.

My mind cleared to sharper focus with the flesh. I turned my eyes from Karen's for a moment and looked up at the President, his closely cropped hair, gray and tough like the fur of an old bull, his eyes still agate-like from the narrow escape he had had, his nostrils still flaring in the center

of his rugged face. An old bull, yes, the leader of the herd. If he had been killed who would have taken his place, made the big decisions? The decisions. That was it. The President made the decisions, and, the way things were now, the whole world, the entire herd, went that way. The herd was streaming over the mountain pass, destruction in some of those side passages. Assassination of the President might start the herd down some gulley toward a precipice. Or maybe not. I didn't know. I was just—there—when the herd started to turn the wrong way.

And now—I turned my eyes back to Karen, my wife through all eternity—now my job here was done. I would go on up the pass to some other danger point. Here the herd thought I was a hero. There the story might again be different, as it had been before. I wasn't the boss. Just—ten bucks a week and meals.

I thought of the money in my pocket. Karen would need it. She should have it. I looked up at the President. "The dough in my pocket," I said. "She should have it." I saw he had heard me and turned my eyes back to her. What I saw in her eyes told me she wouldn't need it. It was—just as well . . .

"See you soon, darling," I said.

"Very soon, my love," she whispered, her red lips trembling.

"Mrs. Iscariat?" I whispered.

"Yes, darling?" Karen said.

I smiled. "Good bye."

True **MYSTIC** *Adventures*

THE DEMON THAT STOLE MY WIFE

By
Pat Fox

PERHAPS her unusual, strange, exotic personality attracted me as much as did her rare beauty and penetrating intelligence; but whatever the reason, I loved Yevonna Lou Walker instantly when we met.

She had a very evident mystic tendency and seemed to possess in some measure both the power of prophecy and the gift of clairvoyance. I learned she had been born with a veil over her face. She liked to walk alone in the woods, and I often saw evidence that she was

able to commune not only with nature as we perceive it, but with the dark and sinister aspect of it as well. Though much preoccupied with occultism, she found time to study the Holy Scriptures assiduously. She made great practice of Yoga, mind-reading and fortune telling, and was a fair poet and a good artist.

I recall now that when I asked her to marry me, she studied me silently at length before giving her answer. Finally she said: "Yes. But not because I love you.

We read the Bible, and we learn of demons, and of the casting out of demons, but we tend to place the reality of demons two thousand years in the past. Do demons exist today? Do they force their way into human beings as they did in Christ's time? Here is an actual experience that will shock you.



Photographic copy of Mrs. Fox's own sketch of one form of the demon.

Only because I must. I would refuse if there were only love. For you see, it . . . it won't turn out very well. Yet, what must be must be."

Delighted that she had accepted, I soon forgot about the prophecy. It remained in the back of my mind till the demon had taken her from me.

While she was pregnant with our first child, it was brought to my attention that all was far from well with her. She kept having very wild dreams, and she told me that a demon was trying to take up residence inside her. She even described this demon to me, saying that he appeared to her in two forms; one of them being as a man very much like myself, the other a creature with a human face, a cat's body and tail, an eagle's legs and talons and a bat's leathery wings. This apparition never spoke to her, she said, but strange ideas ran through her head when he made an appearance. These ideas constituted the delusion that I was somehow responsible for her misery, and created in her an overwhelming urge to destroy.

Very concerned, I took her to see two psychiatrists at Danville, Virginia, our home town, letting her believe that they were merely physicians and that she would receive physical treatment only. They were Dr. White, since deceased, and Dr. Marion Love, who still practices in that city. Carefully, with a friendly family-doctor approach, they picked her mind. But they could elicit no mention of her delusions nor extract any information about the demon. Both declared her physically healthy and mentally sound.

After Glinda Patricia, our first child, was born, we moved to Norfolk, Virginia, where I became employed as a writer and announcer

at Radio Station WCAV. Bonny, as I and her friends affectionately called her, continued to believe completely in the demon, and he kept on appearing to her. I was constantly conscious of this, and I worried considerably about her.

Kay Michael, another daughter, was born to us at Norfolk, and immediately following the birth, Yevonna began showing definite signs of losing her mind. She exhibited what I took to be the symptoms of dread schizophrenia. Her personality resolved into two major factions. One she called Yevonna and the other Bonny. Personality Y was brilliant, quiet, tender, well-kempt and likeable in every respect. Personality B, however, was a slouch, garrulous, dull, inconsiderate and rather mean.

The delusions of persecution were greatly in evidence now, and she often became violent, causing me much embarrassment by raging vociferously and picking quarrels with neighbors. I was terribly upset by it all and had difficulty holding on to my job. But worst of all, now that her trouble had enlarged to most alarming proportions, she refused to see any doctor, including Dr. Mason Andrews, her personal physician, who had delivered the second child. So taking her again to a psychiatrist was impossible.

This crisis came not long after the first of the year in 1952. For two and a half years I had watched

her condition develop and had listened to her speaking of the demon. But I wouldn't admit that a demon could exist. She was merely a split personality, with two major factions, the worst of which naturally became more and more predominant as her dementia progressed. Dr. Andrews, seemed to agree that she was in a psychotic state and advised me to have her committed to an institution for the insane.

Reluctantly I signed the necessary legal papers and obtained a hearing before Judge Leonard H. Davis of the Norfolk Police Court. But when we stood in that court, Personality Y shone forth from my wife like the newly risen sun and spoke brilliantly in defense of her sanity. She actually made me proud of her. She told a story that actually held water. She made me out as a mean husband who was trying to get rid of his wife. In fact, she managed to bring apparent discredit on the testimony of several witnesses. She confused two court physicians who examined her and placed reasonable doubt in the mind of the judge. It was unbelievable!

I won't even attempt to indicate or reproduce on paper exactly how it happened, for though recourse to the actual records can be had, it can't be done because the atmosphere that prevailed in that courtroom wasn't written into the record. Neither can I conjure it up again here. But I must say that at

the hearing, as well as in the events of our entire married life, a sinister force of some kind seemed to direct.

I knew her speech had been a good one, but I didn't believe she could have fooled the doctors, who were scientists and learned men who would not yield so easily as most of us to fanciful argument and emotional appeal. Therefore I was amazed when Judge Davis, after a brief consultation with the physicians, addressed us with these words: "The Court does not find the evidence sufficient to commit Mrs. Fox. This hearing is therefore dismissed."

Yevonna was elated, I was non-plussed, and our relatives attending were much puzzled by the entire affair. But I knew that my wife was insane, despite her brilliant mind.

"I certainly hope you are right, sir," I told Judge Davis, "but in my heart is the awful feeling that you have turned loose a very dangerous maniac."

Still beside myself with apprehension, and now very much afraid to leave my wife alone with the children, I placed our two daughters at Saint Mary's Infant Home in Norfolk. Then with time on her hands, my wife, or Personality B, who now dominated the picture, was able to get about the city much more. She started quarrels and fights with the people she encountered and seemed to receive a perverse pleasure from them.

People often called me at the station about her, and I was greatly embarrassed. The other tenants of the apartment house where we lived began to complain, and the landlord suggested that we leave. I had the premonition that if I did not do something quickly about my wife, she was going to get into some kind of awful trouble.

Seeing no other course open, I resigned my position at the station, and Bonny and I packed up our belongings and drove to the home of her mother at Danville. Mrs. Sadie Walker was a working woman with other children to support and was hardly more capable than I to care for her grown sick daughter. She suggested that we go down to her farm in South Carolina and live there for a few months, where Yevonna could cause me no further public embarrassment and where we might visit the good doctors of Columbia. She felt certain that in this new environment her daughter would grow considerably better, if not make a complete recovery.

With the hope a coming lengthy vacation engenders, we went to the little farm, which lay near the Village of Blythewood in the County of Fairfield, about eight miles from Winnsboro, the County Seat, and twenty miles from Columbia, the State Capital. But we discovered that the tenant was still occupying the only habitable house. While waiting for this family of sharecroppers to move, we

rented a housekeeping unit from the Cabins in the Pines Motel, at Eau Claire, a suburb of Columbia. It was at this motel that I received the shock of my life and had my faith in the conclusions of science almost completely shattered.

I was awakened one night by the continuous talking of my wife. Her voice was surcharged with a very strange and alarming emotion. I stirred sleepily and finally realized that she was speaking directly to someone or something. In a hazy twilight condition, I listened disinterestedly.

"Thou foul, tormenting fiend!" she was saying, in stilted, highly emotional English. "Is there no rest from thee this side of the tomb? Thou hast taken away my children and made an enemy of my husband. And now thou hast followed me here! Get thee hence, Demon! Get out! Leave us alone!"

Needless to say, her words, once understood, were electrifying. I was shaken by them into complete consciousness, and I sat up in alarm. Yevonna was sitting up in bed beside me, peering intently up into the dim darkness. Then I also saw what she was looking at and speaking to, and I almost collapsed from fright.

For there over the bed floated an enormous, faintly luminescent face of greenish hue. It had a deathly appearance, with grey-blue lips, dry-looking white fangs and flowing greyish hair. But its orange-colored eyes glowed feverish-

ly, and it leered down with quite a lively and human lustfulness upon the half-naked person of my lovely wife. I did not see its body, which Yevonna had described to me, nor its wings, for my gaze was fastened immovably upon that terrible visage.

"Good God Almighty!" I cried, at last regaining my voice. "What's this?"

But neither the demon nor Bonny paid me the slightest attention.

My wife was saying mechanically, almost hypnotically: "Almost, thou hast conquered me! And yet . . . yet there is a way to send thee forth. Therefore, in the Name of Him that liveth forever and ever . . . in the Holy Name of the Almighty Jah, thy God and mine, I charge thee, Demon: Speak thine intent or begone!"

Whatever the demon might have had to say, I didn't want to hear. I broke the bonds of the paralysis that held me and switched on the bedlamp. The apparition vanished instantly with an unearthly sigh that shook the room, leaving my wife and me sitting there still trembling and pale, but quite alone. We just looked at each other intently and silently for a time. Then I got up and poured us shots of whiskey from a bottle in the kitchen. The remainder of the night we sat and discussed the thing we had seen and the strange events of our life together. The next day we moved to the country.

Our funds were sufficient for us

to live several months without an income, but I determined that we should raise a garden and earn money by writing feature stories and book reviews for local newspapers, so that we might remain there in comfort indefinitely. The vacant house wasn't much, and the spring was a good distance from it, but we felt we could make out well enough until the Saunders family, the sharecroppers, moved away. However, we were so well satisfied after a short time that we told the tenants, who turned out to be a very interesting and amusing backwoods family, that they need not leave at all, but stay on in the big house and tend the farm another season, if they could get Mrs. Walker's approval.

We were happy, despite the absence of our children. I was feeling fine, the rugged life and hard work agreeing perfectly with me, and Bonny seemed a lot better. Things were looking up. I borrowed Bud Saunders' mule and broke the ground of the fields that lay about our shack. Filled with pleasant memories of my boyhood on a Virginia tobacco farm, I began to consider the possibility of getting out a crop in partnership with Bud.

I sat at a large table one night scribbling away at the first draft of a script I was writing, and Bonny was in a rocking-chair near the fireplace sketching. I paid little attention to her and presumed that she was making a drawing of

the interior of our new home. Finally she finished the sketch and brought it over and laid it on the table before me. I looked at it. It was a picture of myself, somewhat distorted, Negroid characteristics accented and the entire picture heavily shadowed to produce an air of evil. But the eyes! Those awful eyes! I shuddered as I studied them and was reminded of a line from Poe. Those "eyes had all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming"! It was a remarkable likeness, I had to admit, but my wife had made a monster of me!

"Fantastic!" I told her. "But I didn't sit for this. Your view was from the side, and there was the problem of light. Moreover, I was wearing my spectacles. You couldn't have drawn so well from memory. This is a full-face portrait."

"It is an accurate representation," she informed me. "But it is not a picture of you."

"It most certainly is! Who else, pray tell?"

"It is the face of the demon," she replied.

"I thought we had gotten rid of him," I said, as she walked over to the fireplace and stood with her back toward the flames. "Besides, he didn't look anything like this to me."

"You forget," she answered, turning slowly toward the fire with a strange smile, "that he appears in two forms, and this is one of them. He stood in the center of the floor and looked at me all the while

I drew him."

"Utterly unbelievable!" I muttered.

I hardly realized that she was taking my .22-caliber rifle down from its rack over the mantel till she faced me with the weapon in her hands. As I sat gasping in frozen astonishment, she cocked the piece and pointed it straight at my heart which seemed to stand still!

"Don't you understand, Pat?" she asked, a wild light in her eye.

"You! You are my demon! The Devil is with us, in your body. He could not conquer me, but has taken you instead. But don't worry, dear. I will release you. I will cast him forth herewith!"

Her finger began tightening on the trigger. I was spellbound, speechless. I suppose I must have been a pitiful sight, sitting there with every hair of my crew-cut and my week's growth of beard standing on end, clutching my pen impotently and glaring owlishly at her through my hornrims. In a moment a bullet would tear its way through my heart, and I would never even hear the report of the rifle.

But suddenly there was a slight noise on the rooftop, as if a night-bird of some kind had alighted there. It sounded very loud, however, in the hush that lay over the room. We both glanced up as whatever it was began to measure the length of that tarpapered roof with its footsteps. No, it wasn't a very

great noise. It couldn't have been. Yet those hopping-about sounds or footsteps were like the hoof-beats of a horse in the awful stillness of impending death. I grasped at the straw.

"Bonny," I said, as my wife looked back at me, watchfully, "you are at least partly right. That there is a demon in our life there is no doubt. Both of us have seen and heard him. But if he appears in a form like myself, he does it to turn you against me and divide us, for he knows that together we might be too strong for him. He has not won yet. He has not possessed me . . . nor you completely. Listen! Listen well: He stalks upon the roof this very instant!"

Though I have been a radio announcer for a number of years, though vocal expression and interpretation are my profession, and I am fairly adept with them, I was startled by the effect I achieved in that mad atmosphere, with those strange noises on the roof. The look that came over Bonny's face was enough to assure me that she could all but see the demon crouching there on the steep roof, his orange eyes glowing balefully in the darkness, his fearful talons digging for a good hold, his leathery wings outspread for balance. Indeed, the eerie feeling created or expressed by my voice caused chills to course the length of my own spine. I could almost believe it myself!

"When he disappeared," Bonny

said, "he walked over and entered into you."

"He has deceived you," I replied. "His main interest is you. He can't truly exist in my mind. He would only try me if he had failed with you, anyway, and he hasn't given up with you yet. Believe me, he is there upon the roof!"

She had kept the rifle pointed at my breast, but now as the noises continued, she turned it toward the ceiling. "Thy refuge is not here!" she cried, firing up through the unceiled rafters. "Begone, foul Fiend!"

There was a loud scrambling and flapping noise as the creature took wing, mingled with the dying echoes of the gun's blast. Instantly I leapt up and lunged toward my wife. I wrested the rifle from her hands and slapped her down, then stood wrathfully over her and removed the clip from the weapon.

Her eyes were filled with pain and disbelief and horror, as she looked up at me, the wild expression having suddenly departed from them. "You . . . you struck me!" she wailed childishly. "You don't love me anymore!"

The worst having come, I determined to show no mercy at this moment. "I've never hit a woman before in my life," I told her. "But I've never had one to try killing me, either. You are insane, Bonny . . . a lunatic!"

"I . . . I do . . . fear you are right," she whimpered. "O Lord, have pity!"

I got a blanket from the bed and went out and locked myself in the car. I sat there wrapped in the blanket, brooding about the fantastic events of our life together and thinking about Glinda and Michael. I wondered if they were happy at St. Mary's. But about that at least I decided I could be content. Mother Thomas and the other Daughters of Wisdom are kind to little children.

In a few minutes Yevonna came out and tapped on the window. "Let me in," she pleaded through her tears. "It's chilly out here."

"Then go back in the house," I told her. "Leave me alone. I want to think."

"Please, darling," she begged. "That's a weird old house. The ghost of Aunt Alice, the slave Great Grandpa Billy built it for, prowls nightly through it. I'd be scared to death alone in there. Let me in. I need the feel of your arms about me."

I never could stand to watch a woman cry. I opened the door and she got in. Soon she had wept herself to sleep in my embrace. I kept sitting there thinking, mostly about what I had to do the next day.

When morning came we packed hurriedly, bade the Saunders farewell and, without giving any reason for leaving, headed back toward Virginia. It was a long drive and the car was heavily loaded. Progress was slow.

Having had no sleep, I grew very

weary along the way. Pulling the old sedan off the road and parking in a grove of small trees, I sighed languidly and laid my head on Bonny's breast. Her cool fingers were pleasant as she massaged my neck; her soft lips were sweet on my brow. I relaxed and slid down till the back of my head lay in her lap.

"Go ahead and sleep, darling," she coaxed, glancing significantly at the handle of a long butcher-knife, which protruded from a small tub just over the back of the seat. "I solemnly swear that I shall not murder you as you slumber."

I grinned briefly, then looked up at the roof of the car, and out beyond that roof to the eternal sky, the dwelling-place of dancing stars and of whatever gods there be. "Show me the man," I said, "with sufficient faith to sleep peacefully in the unrestrained presence of a homicidal maniac."

"You may sleep in safety, sweetheart," she murmured. "You, when many might not."

"Yes," I answered, catching her eye and raising my hand to her cheek, "I *can* sleep . . . but not till you are sleeping. And I command you to sleep," I added, stroking her cheek softly with my palm, as she gazed down into the glare of my spectacles. "Heavy your head, and heavier your eye. A great yawning world of darkness waits to receive you. Come . . . come with me, my dear, to the soft slumberous land of the uncon-

scious where there is naught but dreams . . . in the sweet silken silence of sleep!"

For an instant she nodded. But suddenly she ripped her eyes away from mine and laughed hysterically. "It won't work, Pat!" she declared, and I knew that I had failed. "It's all but impossible. You can't hypnotize an insane person. That's elementary."

I looked up toward the roof again. "Then *death* do us part!" I whispered to the God out there in the sky. "Thy will be done!"

As the veil of unconsciousness drifted down upon me, a tear splashed in my face, and I was vaguely aware that Bonny was weeping again.

When I woke day was gone. Yevonna was sitting in the open door of the car with her feet hanging out. When she heard me yawn and stir, she caught my hand and squeezed it.

We drove on toward Danville, stopping several times to eat or buy gas or fix a flat. We took our time, and when we arrived at our destination it was already morning.

Neither of us said anything when we pulled up at her mother's house on Stokesland Avenue in Schoolfield, a suburb of the city, the village that sprang up about the famous Dan River Mills. Though no mention had been made of it, I'm sure Bonny knew exactly what was going to happen. I put her personal effects and all the

housekeeping ware on the front porch. Then I got hurriedly back into the car, fearing a scene, afraid that she would try to stop me. But neither of us uttered a word, and we were parted in a trice.

I watched her in the rear-view mirror as the old Chrysler roared up the hill, though my vision was blurred with tears. And the sight of her standing there waving farewell, wet, hopeless sorrow in her eyes and dark despair written on her face, will follow me in memory to the grave. This was the end, at last, and we had not even said good-bye. I had lost and so had Bonny, finally, to the demon. My heart was filled with misery. I felt that I wanted to die.

I almost did! Death rode up that street with me! So occupied was my mind, so confused my senses, that a fast freight nearly got me as I crossed the Southern's tracks at the top of the hill!

I was scared terribly, and I realized that I didn't truly want to die. That was why I had left Bonny before she could murder me before she could worry me out of my wits before the demon could destroy me as well as her. I must live. I must hold on to my sanity in these mad latter days of this fantastic age. I was the father of two lovely and helpless little daughters who needed me. And they were more important to me than Bonny or myself or anyone in the world.

Without visiting my home-

folks, who had already gone to work at the cotton mills, I left the city and drove back to Norfolk. Two months later, in August 1952, Mrs. Walker called me at Virginia Beach, where I was living then, and informed me that, in a hearing before Judge Calvin W. Berry of the City Civil Justice Court at Danville, my wife had been legally committed to an institution for the insane. The news saddened me further, but I knew it was the only thing that could have been done for Yevonna, and I was glad for her mother's sake.

At present my wife is an inmate of Western State Hospital at Staunton, Virginia, her diagnosis being paranoid schizophrenia. She isn't violent now, but rather good-humored most of the time. Her mind, as when I first met her, is quite lucid, and even brilliant in some respects. I went to see her not long after beginning this story, and she showed me an article she had written for the hospital monthly. She keeps busy drawing, and is turning out some pretty good poetry.

But they aren't talking of letting her loose yet. The doctors at Western State say she is one of the most unusual cases they have on record. Her symptoms don't fit the books as well as those of most schizophrenics, her degree of personality disintegration being

small in comparison with others of her type. But the prognosis isn't good. Only about forty percent of her kind of lunatic ever recover completely. Yet I have hope for her and encourage her as much as I can.

Well, those doctors don't know everything, as the high percentage of their failures would indicate, and personally I can't help believing in the reality of Bonny's demon. Perhaps it is silly and superstitious of me, though the greatest of all books, the Bible, supports my theory that there truly is a demon involved here and that he might be cast out, but I wish I were a man of great faith, with a blameless life behind me, the kind of man God gives power over demons. Then I might with authority and effect command the fiend to obey me. Then I might say to him:

"Come out of her, thou unclean evil spirit!"

But I am not such a man . . . rather a weak and unrighteous mortal. Yet I cling to what little hope I have and pray that someday the demon might become bored, forsake his present habitation and take up a new dwelling-place elsewhere. Then, the Lord willing, Bonny and Glinda and Michael and I can all be together and happy again.

The End.



UPLIFT, INC.

One of the most persistent of beliefs is the one which begins with the primitive idea of the witch and the broomstick on which she rides. We have the legend of the witches Sabbath, to which not only witches, goblins and the like fly, but human beings themselves, engrossed in evil, come to do homage to the Devil and are carried to their evil worship through the air with the assistance of evil spirits. Here is another legendary superstition which seems to have some basis in fact. For human beings DO fly through the air and there are any number of well-authenticated instances. In this factual article, our researcher has given us, in sometimes humorous fashion, a resume of some of the most famous examples of levitation. However, he does not go into the mechanics of this weird phenomenon, and it is left to your editor to point out that today, in seance circles, there are still examples of "spirits being able to levitate objects, and even humans." There is a saying that when things fly through the air in this fashion, a new era in spiritualism is dawning.

By Len Guttridge

WHEN I was a boy in Wales my elders told of an explorer-cum-evangelist who returned from the far east with a religion which was a quaint blend of Oriental mysticism and Welsh revivalist fervor. Not the least of his powers was an ability to produce from his congregation acts of levitation. The bolder disciples would lay flat on their backs, gaze hopefully ceilingward and try to summon the faith needed to lift themselves off the floor while, standing in their midst, the evangelist would invoke the aid of several deities.

Accompanied by loud urgent

whoops from the assembly and intense exhortations from the preacher, some of the zealots would become airborne, altitudes understandably varying. The others remained quite grounded, their faces red and sheepish.

Each meeting was concluded with prideful accounts of past achievements. Statistics were vouchsafed. "I got brother Evans up to four feet that night. Sister Llewellyn, six-foot-three." Etc.

Paradoxically, the evangelist was ruined by his greatest performance, the case of Brother Morgan who was despatched to the roof where he rubbed nose and

knees against the grimy sky-light window. When it was feared that a sudden switch-off, as it were, of faith would have disastrous consequences, a janitor was brought in shouldering a tall ladder. He climbed to the top and in reaching forward, inadvertently pushed the window open. Brother M. promptly shot out and was never seen again.

His ascension was the preacher's downfall. Warned by the authorities to cease these elevating practises he vanished into the oddly contrasting profession of coal-mining.

While the fate of brother Morgan remains apocryphal, it is true that saints, mystics and clairvoyants have dabbled in levitation for centuries. Mostly, the recorded incidents describe simple horizontal soarings although later variations included neatly flattening out a few feet above ground, ascents with tables, pianos and sympathetic members of the family.

The paucity of twentieth century reports may be due to man's progress in jet-propelled travel. Luxury airliners have made escapades like that of Mrs. Guppy, who in 1875 flew across London clad only in a nightgown, quite unnecessary.

The basic concept of Newtonian gravity is, of course, challenged by such phenomena as I will mention. If the accounts be true (and several are surprisingly well-authenticated) then gravity

as we understand it was somehow defied or rendered temporarily inoperative, *by a power currently incomprehensible to us*. It does not follow it will always be so. After all, we overcome gravity every time we take an airplane trip. And the mechanics involved in so doing would most assuredly baffle Cro-Magnon man. To us, they are almost commonplace.

While altitudes registered were rarely extreme, hagiographers unanimously agree that the champion of the saints, in startling truth a man above men, was the 16th century's Joseph de Coberтино who shot heavenward with such frequency that he was everywhere followed by admiring groundlings. When a madman was brought to him for cure he seized the fellow by the hair and they rose together taking a fifteen-minute flight. The lunatic was instantly cured. This might be described as an early form of shock therapy.

The flying Friar's superiors, perhaps secretly envious but outwardly resenting the impious publicity, banished him to Assissi where he voiced protest by rocketing to a height of eighty feet.

The gift was not confined to men. M. Olivier Leroy, whose work on levitation may be regarded as authoritative, cites 112 cases involving men and 93 of women. Neither age nor ill-health repressed the subject. Alphonse de Liguori levitated himself at the age of ninety-one on (or off?) his

deathbed. Many saints took the air as children.

Not all the descents were as slow or gradual as the ascents. A French nun rose while kneeling on her devotional stool. She fell off it in mid-air and suffered minor bruises. And not all the subjects (or victims) were willing. St. Therese, whenever she felt the urge coming on, would hurl herself to the ground and beg to be spared. Gerard Majella, upon hearing his favorite tune played on a flute, just couldn't help himself. The music literally carried him away.

Among the saintly pioneers of aviation, duration figures vary. The record seems to be held by Mabile de Simione who remained aloft for two whole days.

Insufficient evidence forces us to bypass, however reluctantly, the fascinating story of one Henry Gordon who slid upstairs on a stairway banister. Still, the mid-nineteenth century is loaded with fairly well-established accounts of annihilated gravity, not all confined to Europe. Refusing to await the arrival of the Wrights, a few Americans were rising to considerable heights unhampered by any impedimenta at all.

The place is Buffalo, N.Y. Ira, eldest of the three Davenport children, has tired of playing the usual hackneyed childish games and is floating lazily, nine feet up, around the room. Willy, himself possessed of an impulse to look

down on his parents, joins him. Not to be outdone, tiny Elizabeth, albeit a trifle jerkily, soars up too. The earthbound parents exchange helpless glances. But henceforth, at home with the Davenports will never be called dull.

Unquestionably, Ira's best feat was the flight he made around the room, through the hall, across the yard, over a fence and into the street, seventy feet away. William, if less spectacular, was perhaps more forceful as witness the time he hit the ceiling with such vigor his head broke through the plaster. The event was all the more laudable because, we are told, of the added weight of an auctioneer who happened to be hanging on to his legs.

The honor of being the most distinguished subject of levitation—indirect, it is true—belongs to President Lincoln. Seeking relief from war tensions he attended a seance in Georgetown. The medium was the socially popular Miss Colburn whose charms extended even unto the piano for when one of the party commenced playing, it promptly waltzed and jiggled its way over to her.

An eyewitness account relates that when, at this point, someone suggested sitting on the thing, the President, "filled with enthusiasm, jumped up and seated himself atop the instrument," where he was joined by a Col. Chase, a Mrs. Soames and an unidentified cavalry major. The medium

was conscious of a "tremendous wave of energy". Up went the piano bearing the President and his three companions. "It remained suspended in mid-air for a considerable length of time" and, as Lincoln said later, performed all manner of gyrations before landing.

But it was over in London that the most remarkable displays of extemporaneous flight were taking place. The excitement was chiefly centered around Mrs. Guppy, a lady of irrepressible spirits and probably the original happy medium. Her moonlight flit across London suggests dematerialization rather than absolute physical levitation. In any case, the process was not without intricacy for she was one of the largest women in London.

Only her giant size and a certain dexterity in the parlor-trick production of fruit and flowers from the air had singled Mrs. Guppy out from London's run-of-the-mill mystics until one summer night in 1871 when she was at home with a friend and engaged in nothing more harmful than balancing the domestic budget. Suddenly the friend looked up and lo, Mrs. Guppy had disappeared, leaving a slight haze near the ceiling.

Three miles away, eleven men and women sat around a seance table in a locked and darkened room. Something bumped on the table, screams sounded and the

exclamation, "Good God, there's something on my head." A match was struck. There, on the table, sat an entranced Mrs. Guppy, her vast body clad merely in loose dressing gown and a pair of slippers. She clutched a pen on whose point the ink was still wet. All doors were locked. There were no holes in the ceiling.

London was staggered by this novel form of dropping in on friends but the press took a droll view. Mockingly, Punch reproved the skeptics,

*There is a lady, Mrs. Guppy—,
Mark, shallow scientific puppy,
Tho' the heaviest woman in London—marry!
Her, spirits three long miles did
carry.*

*Upon a table, down they set her,
Within closed doors. What? You
know better?
And we be all dupes and self-
deceivers?
Yah, Sadducees and unbelievers!*

Despite scoffers, similar air-lift incidents were reported. A Dr. Monck went to bed in Bristol and woke up an hour later in Swindon, forty miles distant. And it was the good doctor who once surprised his friend by floating off the ground and, after some effort, landing gently on the fellow's neck.

A gentleman named Herne was another of this uplifted circle and

may well have originated the phrase "you can't keep a good man down." He seemed to have spent little time on the ground at all and could probably have boasted of as many flying hours as Jimmy Doolittle. His transits were inclined to be clumsy and frequently heads were kicked. Serious casualties would have to be avoided. So when next Mr. Herne felt his spirits about to soar, the ubiquitous Mrs. Guppy held his arm to prevent his soaring with them.

But Mr. Herne, Mrs. Guppy and the chairs on which they sat rose up together. Alas, at this moment the door opened unexpectedly and knocked the airborne pair off their beam. Mr. Herne crashed to the floor, injuring his shoulder. Mrs. G. forced-landed on the table.

No account of levitation would be complete without reference to D. D. Home who rose to a hundred different occasions, usually in the sight of reliable witnesses. When he visited Rome the Church leaders were so convinced of his supernatural powers they insisted he sign a declaration that "I have not sold my soul to the Devil. . ."

In 1868 Home floated head first out of a third floor room, hovered outside for some seconds then entered feet first through the window of the next room. Despite the presence of observers Punch remained unconvinced. Again the rhyming skeptic went to work.

Through humbugs and fallacies, though we may roam,

Be they ever so artful, there's no case like Home.

With a lift from the spirits, he'll rise in the air,

Though, as lights are put out first, we can't see him there.

Home, Home great Home, there's no case like Home.

It was unfortunate for Home that the performance took place by pale moonlight rather than in broad daylight. Nonetheless, those present swore that it did and were quite at a loss for explanation.

The invention of the airplane dealt a death-blow to the cult of levitation. Why endure a regimen of hideous mortifications, as so many medieval mystics did, to soar half-a-dozen feet when an airline ticket will take you ten thousand?

However, mention should be made of the strange goings-on at Millesimo Castle, Italy, in 1928. Several of the international psychic set had assembled there to be entertained by the Marquis Centurione Scotto who, preceded by a phonograph, shot up to the chandeliers and hung there yelling.

On the next night, in a locked room with subdued lights, a seance was held during which the Marquis disappeared. The doors, it was noticed, were still locked. Search of the adjacent rooms yielded nothing. Finally some strange persuasion led them to a hayloft where the Marquis was found, in the deepest of slumbers. . .



The four men helped each other aboard the freight in the cool dampness of the early morning, bound . . . nowhere?

Melva Rogers is a woman, and although we've never seen her, perhaps she has beautiful hands. Anyway, she has a beautiful story sense, and in this story of a group of men in a hobo jungle who meet a boy with beautiful hands, she has presented one of the oldest yet ever new themes in inspirational fiction. There is an old saying that it is always darkest before the dawn; and another that says to err is human, but to forgive is divine. In this story we find the two combined, and a third one added: God knows what his children need, and will provide it. In everything we do, if we are truly observant, we will find the hand of God, that gentle lift that urges along the path we should follow, gives us that inner encouragement that is all we need to achieve the miracle of regeneration.

The Kid with the Beautiful Hands

By

MELVA ROGERS

"HEY Marv, kick up the fire a little." Marv. That's me, Marvin Cr—Smith. Yeah. Marvin Smith. Fugitive from alimony. My pals—almost called them fellow travelers, ha ha (weak laugh)—were Smitty whose mother never weaned him of the bottle—wine bottle (that's a joke, son)—, Vic, Victor Co-setti and I think that was his real name, and Nick Camberos. The four of us were loafing around our campfire in what the townspeople called the hobo jungle. It was Nick who had yelled at me.

"Kick it up yourself," I said. "Who do you think scraped up the food we just ate?"

"Scraped up is right," Nick said good naturedly. He studied Vic and Smitty lazily, then picked Smitty. "Smitty!" he said loudly.

"Huh?" Smitty said guiltily. "Uh, sure Nick." Smitty had no sense of humor and would do anything to avoid trouble. He got up and went to the fire. But he didn't kick it up to life just then. Instead, he turned in the direction

of the voices that broke in on us.

Our fire was about thirty feet off the railroad right-of-way and the long freight that would leave about sunup was parked there on the spur track. The first voice was that of a railroad dick. We couldn't see him, but we knew he held the flashlight. "Get out of that car you bum— Huh! Just a kid, huh! Get out of here before I run your pants down to the pokey. Go on home and have your mama put clean diapers on you." He laughed tauntingly. A real nice guy, I didn't think.

His flashlight was poked into the half open door of a boxcar. All four of us forgot everything else while we watched. It was almost like a *theatah*. The m.c. had built up the actor, the spotlight was playing on the spot where he would emerge. The audience (that was us) was breathless with curiosity. A picture flashed into my thoughts, of a baby with nothing on but a diaper, with a stick across its shoulder and a bundle in a red bandana tied to the end of it. I sniggered at my own imagination.

Then the kid emerged in the doorway. Tall and gangly, he was probably sixteen or seventeen. He was afraid with the fear of uncertainty in new situations, a greenhorn at riding freights.

"Come on, get down from there," the dick shouted. "I don't know why I don't run you in. You'd get six months at hard

labor if I did. I'll give you until I count three to get off. railroad property, then I'll shoot to kill!" He was really having a picnic, this dick. "One!" He didn't count any higher. His flashlight was following the kid's frantic flight, and he fairly screamed with laughter when the kid stumbled over a rail and sprawled in the gravel. But the kid was up again and running as though he expected to be shot at the next second. He ran into the trees and we couldn't see him any more. The dick laughed some more, then went on his way, hoping to smoke another bum.

I looked at Nick and Vic. We were thinking the same thing. The kid was here in the woods someplace unless he was a mile away already. And we felt sorry for him. But it was Smitty who said, loud enough so the kid would have to hear, "You know, these kids that start out should join up with guys that know the ropes—like us." Sometimes Smitty surprised us that way, showing brains.

It was about ten minutes later that the kid joined us. I guess he spent five minutes before that watching us, sizing us up, working up nerve. But he walked into our clearing with what he thought was the casual unconcern of an old hand at the game. "Hi, bos," he greeted us. "When's the train pulling out?"

Over acting. He was so scared

if one of us had sneezed he would have run like a scared rabbit. Or maybe not. Down underneath there was a desperate bravado, a do or die earnestness. And we all noticed at the same time, all of a sudden, that his hands were skinned raw from his sprawl on the roadbed. That's the most painful thing in the world.

"Come over by the fire and sit down, kid," Vic said quickly. "Marv! Take that tomato juice can and get some water from the creek."

"Right," I said. "Sit down and relax, kid. We'll get you fixed up in no time." I saw the fear retreating from his eyes as I turned in the direction of the creek.

Half an hour later we had the gravel imbedded in his hands washed out, some hot coffee and what little was left of our meal inside him. "What's your name, kid?" Nick had asked casually while gently picking out gravel. The kid had said, "Pete. Jackson." Two sentences, still trying to keep up the act of being an old timer.

"Wish we had something to wrap those hands with," Vic worried. "You won't be able to use them to hop the freight when it starts pulling out at dawn."

"At dawn?" Pete Jackson said. "I think I can have them healed by then—or almost."

SURE we thought he was nuts, but it didn't scare us. After all,

Smitty was half nuts half the time. The trouble with looney bins is that they start in by convincing you you are crazy and are there to be cured. Treat a nuf with respect and generally you'll find he's a lot saner than you are. Smitty had moments when he was a lot smarter than the rest of us. Anyway, who was I to throw stones? I'd given up a good job and wound up in this hobo jungle just to keep from supporting the most vicious minded female on Earth .

"You can really make your hands heal faster?" Nick said like he was interested.

"Sure," the kid said defiantly. "Just leave me alone until time to leave." He threw himself down with his back to a tree and scowled into the fire, ignoring us.

We sat on our haunches around the fire, drinking coffee and smoking roll-your-owns and talking in low tones. The kid held his wide open eyes on the fire as though hypnotized by the flames. We didn't sleep. We would do that to the music of clicking wheels during the day.

It was only about two shades lighter than darkness when a shudder went down the length of the string of cars on the siding. "This is it!" Vic Cosetti said eagerly. He looked over at Pete Jackson, and said, "Come on, kid. We'll boost you into a car."

"I won't need any help," Pete said. "My hands are all right

now."

The cars were in motion. No time to stop for anything. We ran onto the tracks and all managed to get into the same car where Pete had been when the yard dick found him. We heard a yell, but we knew we were safe. They wouldn't stop the train to throw us off, the yard dick couldn't reach our car before it left the yard, and no sane switchman would swing over the side of the boxcar to get at us. Smitty explained all that to the kid. Smitty had nothing else on his mind. I did. So did Vic and Nick.

It got light enough to see after a while. We looked at the kid's hands without letting on, not getting up and going over and asking to look at them.

He was picking the scabs off, and where they came off they exposed unbroken skin. Fresh skin, a little pinker than undamaged parts, but not a scratch!

I looked at Nick and Vic and they looked at me and each other, without saying anything. Smitty went on explaining the fine art of freight hopping to the kid. Sometimes Smitty didn't know the time of day.

I began to study the kid out of the corner of my eye: He had taffy color hair finger-combed straight back, and almost black eyebrows over eyes that seemed feverish or mad, they were so bright. His face could have been that of almost any nationality

on earth. It could have been the face of a pro boxer, or a poet, but he was obviously only fifteen or sixteen, so I thought of Hemingway and put the kid in the lost generation that feels sorry for itself because no one understands it. Sure the kid's hands were okay—but they couldn't have been as bad as they looked when we washed the gravel and blood off, that was all there was to that.

I figured the kid probably lived back at the town where we had hopped the freight. He'd got fed up with things and run away from home. He didn't look adventurous. He looked moody. He would have run away because no one understood him, where another kid would have run away to see the world. Peter Jackson was probably his real name, too. I already knew he was about five feet seven. He was well built for a kid. Good shoulders. His hands—I could see why he was cracked on healing his hands. They were the most beautiful hands I'd ever seen. Talk about intelligence showing in a face or in eyes, his hands were intelligence incarnate, even in repose. They were Pete Jackson. I felt it. He could close his eyes, shut his ears, and find out all the secrets in the universe with just his hands, if they didn't know it all already.

So I was cracked about his hands! So I closed my eyes and went to sleep. And my nightmare

came to keep me company. Doris. Her true colors showing. A real smart girl. Marry a guy for a couple of years, then divorce him and get big alimony—all you can get—and collect it forever. Not marry again. But taunt the guy with it so it will hurt every week when he shells out half his paycheck. Laugh at him. You can put him in jail if he doesn't cough up. Doris. How long did she think a guy would take it before throwing away everything just to keep from being a sucker? I'd taken it for over a year, praying she'd just keep her mouth shut, or maybe say thanks just once. I'd even thought of killing her, wrapping my fingers around her throat, squeezing, seeing her sharp tongue stick out and turn black—Someone was slapping my face. I opened my eyes and saw the roof of the boxcar, heard the clicking of the wheels, felt the swaying of the floor. Vic Cosetti was bending over me.

"Take it easy, Marv," he said. "Take it easy. We got company!" I looked over at the kid. He was watching me. "Sure," I said. I looked at the kid's hands. They weren't the kind that would ever kill anything. I looked down at my own. Some day maybe I would go back and kill Doris and get it over with. Then I could sleep. I looked up and caught the kid's eyes on me. I looked away and sat up and rolled a cigarette.

My fingers were shaking, and it wasn't from my nightmare.

The clicking of the wheels and the noise they made became hollow suddenly. We were on a bridge. After the bridge we plunged into a tunnel. Smitty was dragging on a cigarette too, and it was a gleaming coal in the darkness. The smell of coal smoke from the engine got strong, then we were out in the open again.

Nick rolled a cigarette. When he lit it he said, "You know, I *did* kill a—it was my brother. I was just gonna say a guy, but it was my brother. I never told you guys about it, but . . . Marv, you'd have the same nightmare if you had killed your wife. I killed my brother. Joe Camberos. It was in the papers. I guess he was a no-good, but it don't make a difference. I had a liquor store back in Queens. Sometimes I had a coupla grand on hand to cash checks. These masked guys came in. I didn't know one from another. I had a gun in the cash register, and I had the counter fixed underneath with steel plates so I could duck down and be safe. I could have just shot and ducked down, but I figured on wounding one for the police, so they could maybe get the names of the others. But I wasn't too good a shot. I got Joe. The others got away clean, and Joe died before the ambulance got there. I shouldn't have done it. I

was trying to be smart, solve the crime for the cops. But I killed more than Joe. Mom never said so, but she believed I knew it was Joe." He got up and went to the open boxcar door and looked out at the corn country we were passing through. He turned back after a minute and came back and sat down. "Sometimes," he said, "I almost think I did know it was Joe. Maybe I did. There was one other guy I could have shot easier. But are you gonna stand there deciding when guns are pointed at you and you've got maybe a tenth of a second or less?" Nick ground out the cigarette between thumb and fingers. "When mom died I sold the liquor store and gave her the biggest funeral in town. Why not?"

The wheels clicked over the joints in the track. The car rocked with steady gentleness. Like the voice of a lost soul the train whistled up ahead, and echoes of the wailing sound came back from somewhere a minute later.

We listened, like there might be another echo and we didn't want to miss it.

"Me," Vic Cosetti said. We all looked at him. His white teeth flashed in a grin. "I owned a garage. All kinds of repairs. I made good money. I'm second generation Italian. Everybody liked me. I made lots of money—and saved it. I wanted to get married some day. I used to dream of getting married, and maybe my wife and

I going to Italy on our honeymoon. But I fell for an English girl. She had a flashy Chrysler. It wasn't until one day she called up and couldn't get it started, she said. I rushed out to her house. An ignition wire was pulled loose. I told her she did it on purpose and she admitted it. We started going together, and before you know it we got married. We went to Florida for our honeymoon. Her folks didn't like her marrying an Italian but I had money. I got a house better than theirs for Helen. I had to raise my prices and work night and day, but I gave her everything she wanted. I was even getting used to the idea of her not wanting any babies. She was a real lady. The fellows used to say, 'Ain't Vic lucky? He got himself an English girl.'

"Then one day Helen calls me at the garage from home. She's crying. I drop everything and rush home. Her dress is torn half off, her arm is scratched. She tells me she's been raped. Right away I want to know who did it. At first she won't tell me. She's afraid I'll kill the guy. But I twisted her arm until she told me. She made me promise though that I wouldn't kill the guy. I promised. Killing was too good for that kind of a guy. I had other ideas.

"Maybe you read about it in the papers. It was in St. Louis about three years ago. I shot the

guy all right—in a place where he'd wish I had killed him the rest of his life. I told him why, too. Maybe you read about it. It was that guy Fred Langley that got shot 'in the groin'. He refused to tell who had done it. That took so much guts I began to feel sorry I had done it after a few months. But then I would think what he had done to Helen and I was glad. But I couldn't figure out how a guy with that much guts could do a thing like that.

"About six months after I shot him he drove his car into my garage when no one else was there. He'd been parked across the street. I'd seen the car parked over there with a guy in it, but paid no attention. Holdup guys? They could have what little I kept around and no trouble. I didn't even keep a gun handy.

"He lowered his window part way but not enough for me to even get an arm in, and kept the doors locked. I asked him what he wanted. I wouldn't fix his car for a million bucks cash. He said he wanted to tell me something. I said okay, shoot. He said he never raped my wife. I asked him why she would say that if it wasn't true. Then he told me. He had been sleeping with her for over a year. He *got tired* of her. He told her he wasn't coming back. So she told me that story to get revenge on him, knowing I would do something. I didn't believe him and was trying to

get inside his car. I would have choked him with my bare hands. He got scared then and started to back his car out, but he shouted the name of another guy he said she was sleeping with right now, steady. The guy wanted to quit but was scared he'd get the same thing Fred Langley had got. Then he backed real fast and I had to let loose.

"You know how it is. I didn't believe his story. He'd been thinking for six months how to get even, and that was it. He hoped I'd rush out and do something to Helen maybe. But after all, it bothered me. I stewed for almost a week, then it got to the point where I had to prove to myself that he was wrong.

"I was handy with electronics, too. I rigged up a tape recorder with a mike under the bed so it would pick up every sound in the bedroom for eight hours. The tape recorder was in the basement. I'd turn it on just before I went to work in the morning. Next morning I'd put in a new spool and take the old one down to work and let it play while I worked. Nobody noticed because no sounds came out. No voices, anyway. That went on for three days like that. I was feeling good. Then there were plenty of sounds on the tape all of a sudden. Voices and everything. No mistaking what was going on.

"So I sold my garage. I kept quiet until I'd gotten the cash.

I mortgaged the house, telling Helen I had a big deal that needed plenty of cash. I didn't want her to have nothing! Death was too good for her too. It was her fault Fred Langley was like he was.

"Did you ever live with a woman like that? Make love to her, listen to her lies, know what a cesspool her mind was? I did. For two months after I found out the truth. Then I was ready. I had eighty thousand bucks in my pocket. I had a big party. I invited everybody, including Fred Langley and Bill Overstreet, the guy she was sleeping with. Champagne and everything else. At eleven o'clock, I told them, I would have a big surprise for every one. Bill Overstreet's wife was there too. He was a big shot real estate man. Cadillac and a big house. Three kids, one in college. They all wanted to know what this big surprise was that Vic had. Helen hinted that I had been raising money everywhere for some big Deal, so they thought it must be something big. Maybe I was running for President in the next election.

"At eleven o'clock on the dot I brought out the tape recorder. Only Fred Langley got the drift. I waited until I was sure everyone recognized the voices and what was going on in that tape recording, then I walked out while no one was noticing anything except what they were

hearing. I already had my plane ticket to Reno. It took me a whole month to lose the eighty thousand "

It got silent. There was only the sounds of the train as it hurtled forward into the mountains. No more corn country. There were pine trees rushing past the opening in the side of the boxcar.

Finally I couldn't stand the silence. I told my story. It sounded like a petty penny ante confession of a prude to me as I told it, but I told it to the end.

When I finished telling about my alimony fiend there was silence again. The train started downgrade and the braking engine collapsed the slack in the cars with a series of sounds like cannon firing.

There was no one else except Smitty. We pinned him to the wall with our eyes. He squirmed, but weakened. I tried to look away. This was a fever of some kind. A spell. We had no *right* to pin Smitty this way. And anyway—what could he have ever done? A harmless old wino.

"Wh-what are you lookin' at me like that for?" Smitty said. "I didn't do nothin'. I tell you I didn't do nothin'. Why don't you look at the kid here? Maybe he . . ."

His voice drifted off. I looked at Pete Jackson. The kid. I sensed that Vic and Nick were doing the same. He didn't return our look. His eyes were fixed on Smitty,

and suddenly I had a feeling that the kid was nothing but two bright eyes in a vague form. It was as though his entire being had concentrated in his eyes, leaving only shadow to the rest of him. There was something about it that forced me to look at Smitty again, and Vic and Nick were doing the same.

"What's the matter with you guys?" Smitty whined. "God! You'd think I'd *done* something!" His mood changed to pleading. "Look, guys. Leave me alone. What is this, anyway? Just because you shot off your mouths all over the place is no reason—" His mood shifted again. "I'm sorry. I know what it cost you to say what you did. I didn't mean that. But—"

We just looked at him. He looked so harmless I didn't see how it was possible he had done anything in his life but drift like he was doing now. When he got drunk it was always on wine. Stupid drunk instead of mean drunk or obnoxious drunk. He'd never hurt a flea in his life. But why was he acting this way?

Why were any of us acting the way we were? We'd sort of drifted together a couple of months ago in a hobo camp. There'd been three or four others, but they'd drifted in and drifted out. Why had we stayed together? No reason. I myself intended saying so long and going it alone again tomorrow or next day or sometime

soon. Maybe the others did too. We made a point of not being nosey. But it had hit us like a fever, and now we were looking at Smitty, watching him squirm, like maybe we were the Kefauver Committee and he was some gang leader.

"All right!" Smitty said sullenly. "You'll wish you hadn't. You'll be sorry!" He started to blubber. He rubbed his eyes and looked around like he wished there was a bottle of dago red handy. We let him blubber. We looked at him. The car swayed faster and faster on the downgrade, the wheels clicking, and then screaming on a curve, ban-shees on the way to hell, and through it all Smitty's sobs

"I was a doctor." The words seemed to come out of the air, and then I was surprised to realize Smitty had spoken them. His features twisted into harsh lines. "A good one. A surgeon, too. You talk about shooting a man in the groin, Vic. I've done the same thing a few dozen times—with a knife. And gotten paid for it. And made it impossible for any number of women to have children. Each time I felt what a crime it was, to cut away the fruit of life and leave only the husk, with its feeling that it alone was important. And you, Nick . . ." Smitty brushed his forehead with his hand. "Sorry. I've killed several of my brothers—on the operating table. Wrong

diagnosis, mostly. It happens, in spite of everything. Some little symptom the patient forgot because of greater pains elsewhere. I guess I've killed at least thirty people in my time on the operating table. I wasn't God. And I had company. My fellow surgeons. We gave each other the courage of our convictions, so we could go ahead and save our share of lives—a dozen to every one we killed—that would have died without our help. I've even—let—people die, when I could have prolonged their lives for maybe a few weeks.

"But I was a good surgeon. I did my best, and I had a clear conscience. Then — Oh God! Must I go on?"

He blubbered again, and I wondered what terrible thing could have brought a man like Smitty to where he was now. I couldn't think of anything. It didn't seem possible that anything could have broken him down.

"It was late at night." Once again Smitty's voice seemed to originate in the atmosphere and I was startled that he was talking. "An emergency call. About two in the morning. Clot on the brain, and I was on the way to the hospital to operate. No time to shower or fix some hot coffee. I downed a triple shot of Scotch, knowing that it would steady me by the time I was in the operating room. That time of the night traffic would be light. *It wouldn't*

matter."

Bitterness such as I had never before heard in any voice.

"I didn't see her! God knows I didn't see her!" Smitty glared at us one after another. "I felt the thud. I thought, 'God! I've hit a cat!' I felt sick. I heard the body thump several times against the underpart of the car. Maybe that's what made me stop instead of going on. God!" Smitty clamped his hands over his ears. "I hear that thud thud thud every day of my life! She was lying there in the middle of the street, all crumpled up, so small, so lonely. She had on pajamas of pink flannel, and yellow curls. She must have awakened in the night and just opened the front door and just wandered out into the night." A shudder shook Smitty's body. "Five years old," he whispered. "Only five years old." He looked at us. His voice was thin and incredulous. "I ran over her. I should have seen her. I was drunk—just enough so I wasn't looking. I tried to tell them. Nobody would do anything. 'Yes, doctor, we know how you feel, but it was an accident.' *We know how you feel, doctor.* Oh, how stupid stupid stupid."

The clacking of the wheels grew louder. The train whistle was an anxious questioning voice calling for an answer from somewhere ahead. Normal sounds magnified in our numbed minds. In that strangely illusory man-

ner of trains, it seemed we were picking up speed swiftly, when in reality we were braking to a slower speed or maybe a stop.

"Maybe ."

As though pulled by strings manipulated by some invisible puppet master, our heads turned to the kid. It was the first word he had spoken.

". . . your friends here, Doctor Davidson, understand how you feel."

"My friends?" Smitty echoed. "Yes. Yes. My friends. I never thought of that." His voice trembled with emotion. "And maybe I understand how *they* feel. Sure I do."

I looked around, at Vic, at Nick, at Smitty. I didn't feel bitter any more. They were feeling the same way I was. We understood one another. How could we ever go separate ways?

"I could start another repair garage," Vic said.

"We could," I corrected.

"Sure!" Nick said. "I'll bet my life I could find some angles to get us started in this town we're pulling into. I'll betcha!"

"I—I could sweep the floors," Smitty said.

"For a while," Vic said softly.

"No," Smitty said. "I won't go into practice again. But maybe I could raise some chickens for us to have eggs. I've always thought I'd like to."

Nick jumped to his feet. "What are we waiting for?" he

demanded. "One town's as good as another! I've got a hunch this, is *the* town!"

We rose and went to the half open freight car door. We looked back. The kid hadn't moved.

"Come on, kid. Get the lead out. We're getting off here," Vic said happily.

The kid smiled. "Keep your shirt on. I'll be with you."

Explosions raced the length of the train. It was picking up speed again.

"Let's go!" Vic said, leaping.

One after another we followed him, tumbling down the grassy bank to the ditch. We picked ourselves up and looked around.

"Where's the kid?" Smitty shouted. "He didn't jump!"

"Scared to," Nick groaned. "We should have made him jump first!"

We looked at the departing freight train. We couldn't catch it now. It was too late. We turned our backs on it and took our first look at the town. It wasn't big, but a few hundred yards down the track we could see automobiles racing across the railroad right-of-way. A cross country highway.

"Let's look the burg over," I said.

We climbed up over the bank of the ditch onto a blacktop road, one of the streets of the town. A farm truck whizzed past, loaded with sacks of grain.

Suddenly Smitty stopped in

his tracks and turned around to stare after the train, now almost lost in the distance. We all stopped. "What's the matter, Smitty?" Nick asked.

"He called me Dr. Davidson!" Smitty said. "At the time it slipped out so natural I didn't notice. Now how did he know . . .?"

"How did he know?" Nick said loudly. "How does anybody know anything? Wanna know what I know? I'll tell you." He pointed ahead toward the highway. "See where this street runs into the highway. Well, when we get there we turn to the left. Half a block from there is a garage for rent, complete with everything. We ain't got a cent, but the owner is going to be tickled pink to let us have it. Anybody wanna bet?" He grinned at us, daring us to bet against ourselves. We grinned back at him, then arm in arm went toward the highway.

But Nick was wrong. Our garage was right on the corner. We could see it when we got closer.

Right on the corner, where we could watch the freights go by, and look into the gloom of the half opened doors of empties as they passed, hoping to see a face, a pair of eyes.

You see, we all feel that maybe some day the kid might come back to see how we are doing. And we keep on our toes, just in case he does. Me, and Smitty, and Vic, and Nick.

MARK PROBERT, The Famous Medium

How I Proved His Ability

By Roger Graham

Roger Graham, a student of the mystic, has for many years investigated into the authenticity of mystic phenomena. He is an authority in his field, and is in addition a famed popular writer in many fields. Now, in the pages of MYSTIC, he presents an actual incident from his long investigation and association with Mark Probert, one of the most noted of American mediums.

"HOW about giving me a physical checkup, Dr. Luntz?" I asked casually. "That is, before you leave."

The figure sitting a few feet from me was slowly rocking in a slight forward and backward motion, the head cocked to one side as though listening, the eyes closed tightly, deep lines etched in the lean face, the high forehead. For almost two minutes there was no reply, although the lips were parted as though the man were about to speak. Then—

"Well . ." the thin, high pitched voice said, "for one thing, you are slightly anemic—but nothing serious. *If you can remember to eat liver two or three times a week and plenty of green vege-*

tables you will correct that in a month."

I have italicized the above statement because it was word for word the same as the parting words of a lab technician three weeks previous to this when I had donated a pint of blood in an emergency at a hospital two thousand miles away. The lab technician had made standard tests with blood samples. Dr. Luntz had made no tests, had not come near me—in fact, had not opened his eyes even to glance at me!

"Also," Dr. Luntz went on, "you have some trouble in your neck. If you will go to a good osteopath soon he can correct it. The one treatment should correct it so you won't need to go back again."

I had not said so, but my reason for being here had been to find out about this trouble with my neck. For a month I had been extremely nervous. At times it had seemed that an invisible hand gripped the back of my neck. I had said nothing, because I wanted to see if Dr. Luntz could spot this trouble without coaching. He had!

But now he became silent—so long that I decided to help him. After all he had already performed miracles of diagnosis without actually seeing me or touching me. So I said, "I have trouble with pains in my knees when I go to bed at night—"

Dr. Luntz frowned angrily. "I wish you would keep quiet!" he said. "I was about to comment on those pains. They are caused by pull under the knees due to shortened tendons—"

"But the pains are in the knee caps," I objected, "not underneath. On top."

He was testy. "I don't care where you *think* you have pains. The pain is underneath, due to shortened tendons. You sit at your typewriter too much. You don't exercise. Every morning before you get up you should sit up in bed and reach as far as you can toward your toes several times to stretch those tendons. When you take a bath you should do the same when the hot water has had time to soak warmth into those tendons."

I secretly disagreed with him on this part of the diagnosis, but

brushed it off. No use riling the doctor further. "Okay," I said. "Anything else?"

He was silent another minute. Then his agitated expression smoothed into friendliness. "We of the Inner Circle," he said, "wish to extend our greetings to you, Mr. Graham. We are glad you could come to visit us—and the boy here. I would like to stay longer, but I must go now. Goodbye."

"Goodbye, Dr. Luntz—and thanks," I said.

But even as I spoke he left. It was as abrupt as the turning off of a light. Every line of expression in the lean face subtly and abruptly altered. The slight to and fro rocking of the man stopped. A sigh seemed to originate deep within the lungs of the seated figure. Then the face settled into its normal expression of habitual good humor. The eyes opened. And it was Mark Probert who looked up, blinking as though he had just awakened. He accepted the cigarette which his wife Irene lit for him and took a deep nervous drag.

"Dr. Luntz just gave me a physical checkup, Mark," I said. "And he got sore when I started to tell him some of my symptoms. He wanted to diagnose me without help."

"What'd he tell you?" Mark asked. And from past experience I knew that he had no idea what his lips had spoken while Dr. Luntz was in possession of his body.

I told him briefly. Irene helped fill in. "And I saw him," she said. "He went over and stood over Roger. I saw his hands sink into Roger's body and move around, exploring. He was wearing his black clergyman's suit that he always wears." She turned to me. "He was a minister when he was living," she explained, although I had heard this before. "When he died he learned that much of what he preached when he was alive wasn't true, and he became interested in the study of medicine—which he knew nothing about when alive."

"He saved Irene's life two years ago," Mark said. "I wasn't to hold a seance that day, but suddenly I felt the forces pressing to get through."

"And Dr. Luntz came through," Irene said. "He told me that if I didn't go to a doctor at once and go to the hospital to be operated on that same night I would be dead by morning. Mark came out of it, I told him what Luntz had said, and we went to the doctor. I just told him I felt sick. He examined me, and suddenly he became alarmed at what he found. He rushed me to the hospital and operated that night. Later he told Mark I couldn't have lived until the next morning if he hadn't operated."

I had not known of this before, but I had known of the many other miraculous diagnoses Dr. Luntz made while possessing

Mark's body to speak to the living. I also knew of and counted as my friends some of the other members of a small group of spirits who used Mark Probert. During the years since 1946 when I had first made Mark's acquaintance, I had studied these spirits, and the phenomenon that is Mark Probert, the trance medium. Slowly I had come to be convinced that Mark Probert was not a fake.

Any professional actor and most amateurs could easily put on as good a show, so far as appearances go. There is nothing spectacular about it. Mark will be talking, perhaps smoking. Abruptly and with no warning something seems to happen to him. His hands move differently. His wife Irene will quickly reach for the cigarette still held in lax fingers. A breath of wind enters his lungs, seeming to inflate him enough to hold him erect. His face alters. And then he speaks, but in a different voice—which *could* be his own, consciously altered. It *could* be an act. Mark Probert, from all visual evidence, could be putting on an act. It is only in what is said, the accumulation of evidence piled up over the years, that his authenticity has been established beyond any reasonable doubt.

The scene I have described, where Dr. Luntz gave me a physical checkup, took place at the Probert residence at 931 26th St., San Diego, California, late in January, 1949, where he still resides with

his wife, though he travels all over the west, from Salt Lake City to as far north as Portland, Oregon, giving his seances at the homes of people who have attended his seances before and have invited him to come and give seances for their friends, paying his travelling expenses. Far from being well off, he is more often so broke that only a continuous succession of miracles of opportune donations keep him from going hungry.

It is the aftermath of this physical checkup by Dr. Luntz that provides a type of proof that no guesswork, nor mind reading, nor anything explainable by known physical law can explain—or explain away.

As I have said, the anemia diagnosis confirmed or agreed with what a laboratory diagnosis of a blood sample had disclosed a month before. Although I was not consciously thinking of it, I knew about it.

A month later I had forgotten Dr. Luntz's diagnosis. The trouble with my neck returned, but still I didn't think of Dr. Luntz. One day when my neck was particularly bothersome and I was extremely nervous I happened to be passing the office of an osteopath and went in. I told the osteopath what was the trouble. He explored my neck with his fingers, then said, "Aha! Here's the trouble. Now relax your head. What I am going to do will make you quite dizzy for a moment, so don't be

alarmed by the dizziness." While he was speaking he was slowly moving my head this way and that. Suddenly he jerked my head sharply. I heard and felt a sensation that reminded me of a tree falling through brush to the ground after being cut down. The next moment I felt violently dizzy. Almost seasick. I moaned.

"This is what is happening," the osteopath explained. "The top vertebra connecting to the skull itself has two holes in it coinciding with two holes in the skull. Through these holes pass two arteries which are auxiliary arteries supplying the brain. This vertebra was frozen slightly twisted, so that those two arteries were pinched off. That's what produced your nervousness and the feeling of a hand gripping the back of your neck. What I did was to free the joint so that the arteries weren't pinched any more. The sudden surge of blood to your brain produced the dizziness."

I straightened up, feeling better already.

"Feel better?" the osteopath asked. Then, the words and the tone of voice so exactly similar to Dr. Luntz's that it gave me an uncanny feeling, he added, "The one treatment should do it, so you won't need to come back again."

He was right—and Dr. Luntz was right.

Almost two years were to go by before the diagnosis of the trouble with my knees was to be verified

with the same startling coincidence of words and tone of voice. I continued to have trouble with pains in my knee caps after going to bed at night. It was annoying, but human-like, I did nothing about it. Then one day I dislocated my back. An orthopedic specialist was called in to take care of it. For six weeks I was in bed before I was able to move about at all. When I was getting better he said, one day, "The basic cause of your back dislocation is shortened tendons. These tendons start underneath the knees and go up the back on either side of the spine. Due to lack of exercise they have atrophied—shortened. *Every morning before you get up you should exercise by sitting up in bed and reaching as far as you can toward your toes several times to stretch those tendons. When you take a bath, after the hot water has soaked warmth into those tendons, you should do the same.*"

Almost word for word, and almost in Dr. Luntz's voice, this specialist repeated Dr. Luntz's diagnosis! So, for the third time, the hair on the nape of my neck tingled at this proof of something beyond the realm of known physical law.

To me, even if I had no other proof of life after death, and the existence of spiritual forces outside the realm of known law, this confirmation of things Dr. Luntz had said would be sufficient proof. But only to me. To you—it is quite

possible that his report is pure fiction, concocted out of my imagination. No scientist can repeat this event in his laboratory. But any scientist—and even you—are able to find out for yourself. *Mark Probert is himself the laboratory*, so long as he lives and retains this remarkable gift of mediumship.

If anything, I have played down the phenomenon of Mark Probert. I have not touched on the strange feeling experienced while observing Mark under trance, the positive electrical effect that causes the hair on one's arms to rise, the skin to tingle, nor can mere words describe adequately the sensations experienced while watching Mark. If you live on the west coast or plan to be there any time in the near future, you can see and experience these things for yourself by getting in touch with Mark Probert at 931 26th St., San Diego 2, California. In my opinion and in the opinion of thousands who have seen him, he is the greatest living trance medium.

He will not "contact your loved ones." You need not hope for your dear departed brother Joe to "come and tell you he is happy where he is now." But if you are at one of his seances you will have the privilege of talking to one or more of the Inner Circle, a band of discarnate spirits working to help anyone who wishes to listen. Spirits such as Dr. Luntz, who lived in the flesh less than half a century ago, and Yada di She-ite,

who lived before the dawn of recorded history. And if you are lucky, one of the inner circle may casually drop some statement which will become verified by later

events in such a way that you'll feel the hair on the nape of your neck rise. I know. It's happened to me.

—Roger Graham

WINTER SCENE

By William Campbell Gault

IN January, the cold was unremitting, a constant piercing pressure borne by the North wind. There was no new snow; the old snow crusted and turned granular and became a needle-sharp weapon carried by the wind.

In January, she first saw the scene in her mind and she wakened to darkness, shivering. Words without meaning and faces remembered in an unfamiliar scene.

The room she saw was dimly lighted and it was as though she were an occupant, for she could see only part of the bed, the lower part. The man sitting at the side of the bed was old, a thin faced man with bright black eyes and a snow-white beard.

His voice was soft. "Elsa, we are products of our belief. I am no authority on the soul. I accept cognizance; I disbelieve in nothing. If it's God you need, the priest is here."

At the foot of the bed, a man in black in a clerical collar. He seemed to be waiting for some sign from the figure on the bed, waiting in great patience, but without much hope.

The old man's voice went on.

"I'll repeat, Elsa, we're products of our beliefs, and you've had some strange ones. As for reincarnation, it seems to have degenerated into a tool for the kind of monsters you've been associating with, lately. They've taken most of your money, Elsa, and offered you—what? Hope?"

Some murmur from the bed, and the man at the foot, the patient man in black closed his eyes wearily.

The old man's voice again. "Not hope. If there is such a thing as reincarnation, remember it must be retrogressive as well as progressive. All the emphasis is on a return to *this* world, as though that is the ultimate goal of the spirit. It's a belief of the flesh, Elsa." He paused. "You can't die, believing *that*."

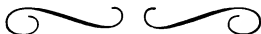
This scene she saw more than once that cold January, and it troubled her strangely, outside of her understanding, beyond her experience.

Heavy with an unborn litter, waiting for the return of her mate, listening for his howl on the wind in the dark cave in January.

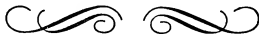
Earthbound

By

Charles Lee



Astral lore is full of instances of "earthbound" spirits, and it is these spirits who cause the phenomenon known as the "haunted house." But just what is meant by the term? What makes a spirit "earthbound?" There are many theories. One of them says that it is by choice on the part of the spirit, while another says it is through ignorance of anything better to do. A spirit, finding itself still on the scene of its death, just hangs around, doing little or nothing, except manifest its unhappiness and bewilderment in "hauntings." Another remains on the scene out of a desire for vengeance upon those who caused its death. Many people believe that the spirit of a murdered person must remain to help work out the karma of the murderer, now so inextricably linked with the victim. Our author, in his story, seems to tend to the latter theory, and has developed a situation (certain portions of which your editor happens to know are true events) in which two murdered persons are either forced or choose to remain on the scene of their murder, and by the fortuitous circumstance of severe illness on the part of a third person, are able to communicate their message to him and bring about vengeance.





"SEE you in the morning," I said to Gus, slamming the car door. "Yeah," I heard him say just before he gunned the motor. He made a frantic U turn on the highway, causing cars to screech their tires in alarmed braking, and was gone. I faced the prospect of climbing the steep hill to the house. It had been raining all day at work. I had gotten soaked before the first hour was over, and stayed that way. The long ride home hadn't helped. I'd sat in the back seat, and Gus had had his window open part way, the cold draft blowing in on me. I hadn't said anything because there were five of us, all smoking, and closed windows would have been impossible.

It was a mile and a half to the

house by the road, but it was a switchback road, and the path through the woods cut across the road twice, and made the same distance in half a mile—all very steep. Eleanor met me at the door and gave me a wifely kiss, then announced that we had guests. "Oh, no!" I groaned under my breath. I plastered a glad smile on my face and stepped through the door.

"This is Captain Blish and his wife Margy," Eleanor said, introducing the uniformed man and his wife. "They just moved into the Greer house. I thought you wouldn't mind if I invited them to dinner tonight, Jack."

"Of course not," I said heartily. "Glad to have you. Kind of cold in here, isn't it. I'll light the

oil stove."

"Why no," Blish said quickly. But I knew it was just politeness. It was getting colder by the minute. I lit the heater and stood by it, feeling the hot air rise quickly. My clothes were still damp.

"Where are you stationed, Captain?" I said.

"At Sandpoint, Jack. By the way, my name's Harry. Eleanor says you play bridge."

"Sure," I said. "How soon's dinner going to be ready, honey? Time for me to take a bath?"

"Go ahead," Eleanor said.

I took a hot tub bath and felt better, but it was cold in the bathroom. I got dressed fast and returned to the oil heater. It was turned way down. "What's the idea?" I protested. "It's the coldest it's been this fall!"

"It's HOT in here," Eleanor said.

I looked at Harry. His coat was off. He was perspiring. "Say!" I said. "I'll bet I've got galvanize fever again." It was one of the occupational hazards of welding in the shipyard. Zinc oxide fumes accumulated in the lungs and produced a temperature. "Where's the thermometer?"

"In the medicine cabinet where it belongs," Eleanor said. She was busy dishing up.

I got the thermometer and stuck it in my mouth as we all sat down to eat. Three minutes later by my watch I looked at the thermometer. My tempera-

ture was normal. "That's funny," I said. "First time I've been fooled." I looked at Harry and Margy and explained, "I'm a welder in the shipyards. I've had galvanize so often I can usually tell to a fraction of a degree what my temperature is by the way I feel. But this time I got fooled."

I remained cold. After the dinner dishes were cleared away the four of us played bridge. I was shivering. I turned the heater up and moved the card table over so that I had my back against the stove. I could feel the hot air blast against my skin, but it didn't warm me up. Finally, at ten o'clock, Harry and Margy could take no more of the heat. They politely insisted they must leave. The moment they were gone I stuck the thermometer in my mouth again. Eleanor said irritably, "There's nothing wrong with you!" But two minutes later when I took out the thermometer and read it, it said one hundred and two and a small fraction.

I had never seen Eleanor so scared before. She ran to the phone and called the doctor. The next moment, it seemed, he was there. It struck me as being very careless when he just looked at me and said, "He's got pneumonia. Get his clothes off and get him to bed." He shoved aside my protests that I knew what my temperature was, and shoved his thermometer in my mouth while Eleanor tugged at my clothes. After he had gone she

told me when I kept at her that he had said my temperature was a hundred and four. She brought a glass of water and shoved three pills at me. "What the heck are those?" I asked. When she said they were sulfa I lifted my eyebrows. I had read just the day before of that new drug sulfa something-or-other. It was rare stuff. Doctors couldn't use it yet except in dire emergency.

In bed I felt better. "Bring me a cigarette," I said.

"The doctor said you shouldn't smoke," Eleanor said firmly.

That irritated me. "Nuts to the doctor," I said. "I was nice to your friends all evening when I didn't feel like it. Now bring me that cigarette and be quiet."

Without another word she brought the pack and lit one for me. I took a deep drag that was mostly a sigh of relief. Then I groaned as my mouth turned every flavor of the bottom of a birdcage. I spit the cigarette out of my lips and saw Eleanor jump to get it before it burned a hole in her Piquot sheets. "To heck with her," I thought viciously as I rolled over on my face. "She doesn't have to weld with wet clothes on all day in this weather. Got to get some sleep or I'll be dead tomorrow at work. Must be after midnight."

The next day was the day before Christmas. Eleanor's mother arrived from Hillsboro and fluttered around, telling me what

a wonderful daughter she had. It sickened me, and every time I wanted a glass of water they were both so busy talking in the front room I had to yell my head off to be heard. I licked that problem by asking for another drink the minute she got to the kitchen from bringing me the past one. Sometimes I did that when I wasn't thirsty. I felt like a fight. But by afternoon I wondered why I had ever loved her. She had no guts. Instead of fighting, she only ran into the front room and cried, while my mother-in-law clucked over her. The doctor came and stuck his thermometer in my mouth. When he reached for it I beat him to it and looked at it. My temperature was a hundred and five and a half. I grinned at him. I felt good. Nice and free. To heck with the doctor. To heck with Eleanor. To heck with my mother-in-law.

Next day was Christmas. At noon Eleanor wanted me to try to come into the front room to the table and eat something. When she said I hadn't eaten for two days I knew it was true. So I gave in. The table was set like I had never seen it set before. I sat down in my bathrobe. I needed a shave and a bath, but I didn't care.

Eleanor put creamy mashed potatoes, white meat from the chicken, and green peas on my plate. I ate one sliver of the white meat. She was watching me instead of

eating. I ate a little forkful of potatoes. My mother-in-law was watching me. I ate one solitary green pea. I looked at all the food. I shoved my plate back and stood up.

"Jack!" Eleanor cried as I went back to the bedroom. I went to bed and listened to her crying.

I didn't hear anything from the front room for a long time, so finally I got out of bed and sank through the floor into the basement. I went into the fruit room and sank through the concrete floor.

"Hello, Jack," the old man said. I knew who he was, but I looked him over good. He was the gardener. An old man with a garden. And there was his daughter. She was beautiful—not an old nag like Eleanor. I told them about being sick. We talked a long time. Finally I thought I'd better get back to bed. I went up through the concrete floor, up through the wooden floor, and climbed into bed.

Eleanor came in a while later. "Have a good sleep?" she asked. "Here's your sulfas."

"To heck with 'em," I said, but I swallowed them. "Heck no. I haven't been asleep," I said gloatingly. "I've been down in that room underneath the basement where our gardener stays. His daughter was there, too," I added maliciously.

"Oh?" Eleanor said.

"Yes," I said with great satis-

faction. I waited a minute, then added quietly, "I'm in love with her." I saw a tear well out of Eleanor's eye and go down onto her cheek—but she had it coming. No guts. Always weeping. I grinned at her and said, "Bring me a glass of water." Without a word she went to the kitchen and came back with a glass of water. No guts. I could have a least respected her if she had told me to go jump in the lake.

But I was underestimating her. Somehow or other she talked her mother into leaving. It was the first step in her plan. She told me her mother had to get back to Hillsboro the next day and go to work. I didn't suspect anything yet. Eleanor kept bringing me water every time I asked for it. That way she lulled me into a feeling of security.

Even her next step didn't make me suspicious. She started giving me three of those new sulfas every five minutes or so, when the doctor had said not oftener than every two hours. I began to suspect, and tried to keep track of the time so I would have evidence, but it was already too late. I was too far gone to even keep track of the time.

It would be the perfect murder. I had pneumonia. People DIED of that. No one would suspect. The doctor would write out the death certificate just like that! I went down under the basement again and talked with the garden-

er and his daughter about it. We tried to figure out something, but didn't get anywhere. I went back up to bed, and kept my eyes open and my mouth shut. Some way I would trap her. She couldn't get away with it.

It was the next morning that I hit on a plan. It would work. I started groaning loudly. Eleanor came into the bedroom. "Call the doctor," I moaned. "I'm dying."

"He was here just half an hour ago," Eleanor said. God but she was diabolical!

"I don't care if he was!" I shouted. "Haven't you ever heard of a turn for the worse? Call the doctor!"

She started to cry. It was a good act. Then she realized it wasn't going over. She got stubborn. "He won't even be back to his office yet," she said. "He was just here. He knows how you are."

"Okay for you," I said meaningfully, turning my face to the wall.

I waited until I heard her leave the bedroom, then I slipped out of bed and sank through the floor into the basement, ran to the right spot and sank through the concrete to where the gardener lived. He and his daughter and I talked about it. We agreed there was nothing much I could do. I was a goner. Finally he had to go to work. He picked up his crooked cane and hobbled out. His daughter and I were alone.

I looked at her sadly. "This is probably the last chance I'll have to come down here," I said.

She was crying. And suddenly we were in each other's arms, clinging to each other. I was crying too. I didn't want to die. I wanted to live, and come down here every day. Poor Mary. She would have no one if I couldn't come down here. It was our last time together.

Much later I went up into the basement and up through the floor into the bedroom and got into bed. Let Eleanor murder me now. She didn't have my love. Her spite couldn't touch the pure love I had for Mary Dyer.

Eleanor came into the bedroom. I grinned up at her. "Okay," I said. "So you're murdering me. You'll get away with it, too. But let me tell you this. I don't love you. Want to know what I just did? I made love to the gardener's daughter! And—there's—nothing—you—can—do—about—it!" I laughed at her.

And she had no guts. Or maybe she was putting on an act in case the doctor showed up again before I died. She cried. She cried and I laughed at her. I was going to die, but I would have the last laugh.

She brought me a glass of water and I drank it. I drank three more glasses of water just to keep her running to the kitchen. Then I realized it was the end. I was going to die, and I might as

well not fight it.

In fact, I decided, I would help myself die, just to get it over with. I would die during the night. I would start dying right now. It was dark outside, and in the bedroom there was only the dim table lamp on. I closed my eyes and concentrated on dying. I held my breath and grunted and groaned in an effort to die. And it was working. To heck with Eleanor. I wouldn't give her the satisfaction of murdering me. I would die by myself.

She kept trying, though. Every few minutes she came in and made me eat more of the sulfas. I swallowed them and grinned at her. I even taunted her. "You think you're killing me with those things," I said. "Ha! I could eat them by the dozen. But I'm going to be dead by morning, and to heck with you. I'm dying by myself. I don't need your help, you murderer. Go on in the other room and leave me alone."

She went. No guts. Or maybe she was smart. If she had stayed I might have gotten up and called the police and told them what she was trying to do.

Finally she figured I had enough sulfa in me to kill me. After that she left me alone. Sometimes I slept. Then I would wake up and remember I was dying all by myself, and grunt and groan until I got it going again. In the morning I would be dead, and it was a good feeling. To heck with all this.

I opened my eyes. The light was streaming in through the window. It was morning. I was still alive! I pushed back the bedclothes. The sheets were soppy wet.

Eleanor came into the bedroom. She took one look at me, and then was on her knees beside the bed, hugging me and kissing me, her cheeks wet with tears of happiness.

"Look at the sheets!" I said.

She pulled one off the bed and twisted it, marveling. Water came out on the surface. A few drops fell off to the floor.

"Maybe the fever's broken," she said excitedly. "I'll get the thermometer."

"You don't need it," I said. "I'm okay now."

But she brought it anyway, and we held hands for two minutes before she took it out of my mouth. We each looked at it. My temperature was normal.

She dropped the thermometer and it broke. Then she was crying. I pulled her down into my arms and let her cry. It was good for her. She had been through torment! After a while I growled, "Guess I was out of my head some of the time."

"Uh huh," she said, without lifting her head.

After a while she struggled to an upright position and made me get up while she put on fresh bed clothing. Then she got on the phone and told the doctor.

I had to laugh about it all. I had imagined she was trying to kill me! And during the night when I would wake up and find myself not sweating I would grunt and groan and hold my breath until I started sweating again. I had *actually tried to die!* It was so funny I laughed every time I thought about it.

Eleanor fixed me some hot beef broth. It tasted good. I ate it all. Then I remembered cigarettes. I tried one, and it wasn't too bad, considering. The soup had tasted burnt, and the cigarette had a burnt taste to it, but was satisfying.

During the following week we had a lot of laughs over everything. Then I began to think about going back to work. I didn't want to work at the Everett Pacific Shipyard any more, but the only way I could quit was to go back to work and work a day, then quit. Otherwise I wouldn't get compensation. With the war on, they had some kind of a law saying you couldn't quit.

I waited until my temperature had been normal for several days running, then called up Gus and told him to pick me up in the morning. He did. At the yard my leadman told me to take it easy. After two hours I began to feel like I didn't have a friend in the world. I was ready to cry. I went to the infirmary—and my temperature was in the low ninety-sevens.

I talked it over with the foreman. I told him I was broke. The only way I could get all the money coming to me was to quit and turn in my tool checks. I promised to hire in again as soon as I was able to work. By quitting time I had my paycheck and had quit. I made Gus keep the windows closed all the way back down to Kirkland.

Three weeks later I hired into the Lake Washington Shipyard. I had told them about having pneumonia. They let me take it easy. The weeks passed. Everett Pacific found out I was working at Lake Washington. They got nasty and for a while it looked like the draft board would get me into the service, but somehow they didn't.

All this time everything tasted burnt. Even cold water. I bragged that I was the only guy living that knew what burnt water tasted like, and maybe it was true. And all the time I was getting stronger. I finally told the foreman I was ready to do anything that came along. I worked, and it was a good feeling, knowing that boats with my welding on them were licking the Japs.

The draft board got active, for some reason. They sent an investigator out to Gus's house to talk with him about why I had quit Everett. He told me about it. In one week I was in 1A and deferred twice. It was one of those things. You worked until they got you. I knew I

couldn't pass the physical though, and even wished they'd get that far and put me in 4F and get it over with, but they didn't. Gad, the money they must have wasted on me!

It was summer again. My temperature didn't drop into the seventies any more. Things didn't taste burnt. Pneumonia was just something I had had. Sulfa was just something I could brag about. I was well. And finally Eleanor kept working on me until I got busy fixing things around the place. Everything had fallen apart! The front porch, the deep well pump house .

I had been in the fruit room a dozen times that day, getting nails. This time I dropped one and bent down to pick it up. I couldn't find it at first. I started looking around the concrete floor. Then, suddenly, the hair on the nape of my neck crawled.

I was half bent over. I was looking at the concrete. And the area I was looking at was too, too familiar.

It was the place where I had sunk through the concrete so many times to visit the gardener!

There was no mistake, no chance for mistake. Every detail was etched photographically on my memory. Slowly, with absolute conviction, I knew that I *had* sunk through the concrete floor here, and that in some unknown reality I had visited an old man

with a crooked cane, and a girl.

In that moment I also knew with absolute conviction that under the concrete right here were two dead bodies. How they had gotten there I didn't know. But I knew they were there. The next moment I was straightening up, my mind busy rationalizing, grasping at straws to completely discount what I had experienced. The house was maybe fifteen years old, and the concrete floor of the basement was as old. The floor was unbroken. Any bodies under it would have had to be there before the house was built. Assuming bodies were there, perhaps only skeletons by now, the souls that had inhabited them would have departed for parts unknown. "For parts Unknown." I chuckled at my own joke, staring at the concrete floor.

Suddenly I thought of old man Carr, who owned the grocery store at the foot of the hill. He had lived in this area for fifty years. He might know things. I went down the hill to the store.

"A pack of Camels, Mr. Carr," I said.

"Okay, Jack. Coming up," the old man said. His eyes flicked over my clothes. I was wearing my work-around-the-house clothes, with paint stains on them. "Doing a little fixing up?" he asked conversationally.

This was the gambit I had hoped for. "A little," I said. "The house is getting pretty old. Needs

quite a bit of fixing. Carpenter ants in the two by eights under the deep well pump, wet rot in the foundation the whole length of the west side of the house. The place is put together better than most houses though."

Mr. Carr chuckled. I opened the Camels, watching him. "Should be," he said. "Built by a retired ship carpenter." He chuckled again.

"What's so funny?" I asked.

"The whole thing," he said. "You'll see why." He chuckled again. "You know the way your property is cut in two by the gulley. Well, it was about twenty years ago, more or less, that things started happening. There was a different house there then. Pretty much run down. A young married couple owned it. Then the man died, and the woman was living there alone and working in town. Nice girl, but she always struck me as being a little stupid. Anyway, she started running around with this fellow. Didn't see much of him at first. Then Mary—that's the girl—came in one day sporting a ring. She and this fellow were going to get married."

Something tingled along my spine. The girl's name so casually tossed out by Mr. Carr. Mary. But it could be coincidence. How many girls were there named Mary?

"Well, she was real proud of the fellow, and he seemed head

over heels in love with her. Nothing was too good for her, he said. He was going to tear down that old shack and build her a real house, best in the neighborhood. He was going to build the house first, and then they'd get married. They bought a tent and set it up across the gulley on that ledge. He moved Mary over there. They were going to get married, so no one thought much about it. Then he started tearing down the house. They were both working, of course. They'd drive down the hill about seven in the morning, and go back up about five thirty. He'd get right to work tearing down more of the old house. Finally he got it all torn down. Took a couple of months. He did it careful, saving most of the lumber to use on the new house. And then one night he comes driving down the hill by himself lickety split. Seems they had had a big quarrel about something. He didn't come back. She was left up there living in the tent, her house torn down. Just a minute." He went to wait on the customer who had just come in. It gave me time to visualize the plight Mary had been in; her house torn down, living in a tent, the man who was going to marry her and build the house walking off like that. I guessed Mary was stupid all right. The man? It sounded to me as though he were insane.

Mr. Carr came back. "Where was I?" he said. "Oh yes. Well, Mary continued to live in the tent for a while. She didn't have any money saved up, I guess. Everybody on this side of the lake heard about what had happened. People would go up the hill and drive around the loop and come down again just to look across the gulley at that tent, and the piles of old lumber around where the house had been. The newspapers heard about it. Reporters came up and took pictures. Guess it was in every newspaper in the country. Poor Mary. She moved into town to get away from it. Was in town about a month, when one day this old fellow showed up. A nice old gent with one of those crooked canes that twist every which way. He stopped at the store and asked where the place was. I told him, and watched him start up the hill. I liked him. Couple of hours later he came back down and asked if I knew where the girl was. I didn't tell him until he told me what he wanted with her. He was a retired ship carpenter. He'd read about Mary's trouble in the papers, and decided he would do something about it. He had a little money, and he wanted to build her house back up in exchange for a place to spend his last years. So I told him where she had moved to, and before you know it the two of them were back

out here, and old George was building a house up there—the one you own now, Jack. Just a minute." He went to wait on another customer.

I was beyond surprises now. My "gardener with the crooked cane" was undoubtedly the retired ship carpenter. Mary was certainly the girl.

I was burning with impatience. I wanted to ask questions, but I knew old man Carr. If I asked questions he would think I was pressing him, and he would get stubborn. So I hid my burning curiosity.

Carr finished waiting on Mrs. Risdon and came back. I lit another cigarette as though about to take my leave and go home. The ruse worked.

"Don't go yet," Mr. Carr said. "You haven't heard anything yet. George did a good job on rebuilding the house. Sunk most of his savings in it. But Mary kept on working and was very happy with old George. We all thought he was like a father to her, and maybe he was. Past sixty, anyway." Carr chuckled, and I recalled that he was in his sixties now. "Then the damndest thing happened. You'd never imagine. Joe came back."

"Who's Joe?" I asked weakly.

"The guy who had deserted her," Carr said irritably. "He came back. Just like that. Guess Mary really loved him, and she was stupid. No doubt of that.

I don't know what went on up there, but Mary passed the story around that poor Joe had suffered from amnesia and had just recovered his memory, and had rushed right back—only to find that old George had built the house. Of course I knew that the papers had made a big play of old George, the retired ship carpenter, and had implied that he was rich, and was going to live out his remaining years with Mary and leave all his worldly possessions to her when he died. But far be it from me to point out the obvious.

"Old George did some grumbling—even to me. But things settled down and after a couple of years everyone took it for granted. Mary and Joe got married legal. I sort of thought that was a mistake, and sure enough it was. Next thing, Mary and old George run off together. Joe was frantic. He had the police run ragged looking for them. They was going up and down the hill twice a day. But nothing came of it. After a couple of months poor Joe—he was quite broken up—did some fixing up on the place, then moved into town and rented it out to the Richardsens—they own their own place in Kirkland now. But they lived there for a few years. Eventually Joe went to court and had Mary declared legally dead so he could get clear title to the house. He sold it to the Pinkertons, you bought it from them."

"I see," I said quietly. "Where's Joe now?"

"Guess I can't tell you that, Jack," Carr said. "Here comes the after church bunch."

Two cars had stopped outside. A third stopped as I went toward the door. I was half way up the hill before I wondered if Carr couldn't, or *wouldn't* tell me where Joe was. Wouldn't? Why would he refuse to tell me? Did he suspect what I felt to be certain—that Joe had murdered old George and Mary, and buried them under the house, and later built the concrete floor in the fruit cellar, to prevent discovery of their bodies? He hadn't mentioned Joe's last name. I knew three Joes here on this side of the lake. Was one of them *the* Joe? Was that the reason?

When I was two thirds of the way up the hill I was asking myself the question, who else might know something about it? I thought of the logical one when I was almost home. Shinstrom, owner of the bank. I knew he had been born on this side of the lake. He would have been maybe thirty-five. And he was owner of the bank that handled the mortgage on the house. It would be logical to ask him.

Monday after work I dropped in at the bank and asked him who had owned the house before the Pinkertons. Without hesitation he said, "It was Joe Medford."

That wasn't one of the three Joes I knew. "Where does he live now?" I asked casually.

Shinstrom looked at me queerly. "What do you want to know for?" he asked.

"Just curiosity," I said. "Got a darned nice house. Old man Carr told me some of its history. It made me curious about the rest of it."

"Oh," Shinstrom said. "If I know Carr you got all of it. Joe Medford *moved* away after he sold the place. If you'll excuse me, Jack, it's getting close to closing time. I have to get some things out of the way."

"Sure," I said, "and thanks, Mr. Shinstrom."

I was getting stubborn about it now. I went across the street to the cafe and looked in the east side phone book. It was as simple as that. Joe Medford lived on Evergreen Point over near Bellevue. Still angry, I dropped a dime in the slot and asked the operator for his number.

I listened to the phone at the other end ring. I had a strong impulse to hang up the phone, but I let it ring, and after the fourteenth ring someone lifted the receiver. "Hello?" a female voice asked.

"Hello," I said irritably. "Is Joe Medford there?"

"Just a minute," the voice said. "I'll call him."

I lit a cigarette and waited. After almost two full minutes a

deep male voice said, "Hello?"

"Hello," I said. "This is Jack Tillford."

"Tillford?" he echoed cautiously.

"Yeah," I said.

"Did you want to see me?" he asked, his voice cautious.

"You know who I am?" I said.

His voice was suddenly brittle. "I've heard of you."

"Good," I said. "You probably know the house I live in. You owned it at one time. I've been checking up, and I guess it was you who put the concrete floor in the fruit room. Is that correct?" I was surprised at the harshness, the *knowing* overtones, of my voice. There was only silence at the other end. I decided on a bluff. "I found out how many bags of cement you bought when you were fixing the place up to rent it out to the Richardsens . . ."

"I see," he said, and I had never heard such a leaden voice in my life. I felt suddenly contrite. Who was I, to be judge and jury? My anger turned against myself. In sudden irritation I hung up. I left the phone booth.

I went home, and by evening I had decided it wasn't worth it to break up that nice solid concrete floor in the fruit room just to uncover something that was so far in the past. Joe Medford—he could keep his secret.

Mary and old George. They were together. They were happy. At least my *feeling* was that they were happy. Old George hadn't minded Mary and I being together. He had gone out and tended to the garden. I had imagined that while I was out of my head! But it was true. Too much backed it up! Still, they were happy together. Why disturb them?

Tuesday evening when I stopped at the store, old man Carr was excited. Big news. Carr fairly danced on his toes as he got me the list of groceries Eleanor had given me to get. "Hear what happened?" he asked. "Joe Medford, out on Evergreen Point. His speedboat overturned yesterday on the lake. They found his body this morning."

"Who's he?" I said stupidly.

"Lives over on Evergreen Point. He did, that is," Carr said. Mrs. Hudson came in to be waited on. Carr looked at me through shrewd eyes. "He used to own your place. Sold it to Pinkerton."

"Oh?" I said.

A COUPLE of months later I couldn't resist. I had to break up that concrete floor. In order to do it and make it seem logical, I had to take out the whole side of the foundation where wet rot had set in, and practically rebuild the whole basement. I used up my two weeks' vacation time at the plant, too.

I marked the spot where I was so sure I had sunk through the concrete floor to visit old George and Mary. After I got the concrete all broken loose I dug down, spending a whole Saturday afternoon doing it.

Know what I found? Not a thing—except a bed of lime shale. I broke it up, hoping to find at least a pair of skeletons. But I found nothing.

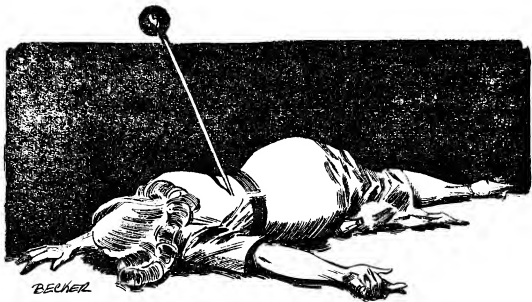
I felt pretty good after I broke up that bed of white shale though. Free, if you know what I mean. I finished breaking up the white shale just before Eleanor called me for supper. When she was yelling at me to come up and wash, I had a distinct feeling of some girl kissing me on the cheek. Sort of cool and delicious.

"Okay!" I yelled at Eleanor.

I shut off the basement lights and went outside to go up the outside stairs. Half way up I paused and looked toward the ledge. The moon was full and bright. The ledge was lit by its ghostly light. And darned if I didn't imagine I saw old George limping on his crooked cane, slowly making it up toward some clouds. And it looked like Mary was with him.

Eleanor got sore because I insisted on taking my temperature when I got upstairs. But it was down to ninety seven and four tenths.

I had a feeling that it would be.



The
DEVIL'S DOLLHOUSE
By Rog Phillips

We know how voodoo witchdoctors take a doll containing something from the body of one they wish to hurt, such as hair or fingernail parings, and proceed to cause harm to the person the doll represents by such things as sticking pins into them. It is a matter of record that such things have been observed by competent observers and reported for what they were worth. But can it be possible that something else is working here? Is the doll itself powerless, but something **ELEMENTAL** created by its manufacture?

MIRANDA LOOMIS was a character — not that she considered herself one. She considered herself a personality. Her fellow townspeople called her a card behind her back, and sometimes to her face. She took it as a compliment, and perhaps it

was. Fifty-eight years of age, she was still a virgin. This state was not through virtue nor choice nor lack of opportunity. It was due to something about her that scared men off. A predatory quality, impossible to pin down. It was too bad, too, because her body was

well formed and her features not unbeautiful, and within her bosom beat a heart capable of fire. It was indeed a stout heart or right now her teeth would have been chattering. It may have been, however, that they could not chatter because they were separated by a good three quarters of an inch due to the fact that her lower jaw hung completely slack in surprise

It was made of one-eighth inch steel rod tapered to a sharp point. Its head was a black glass ball two inches in diameter. It had been driven diagonally downward through the victim's heart with such force that it stuck out in back beneath the left shoulder-blade.

A picture of the victim was also shown. It was a very familiar face



Rev. Augustus
V. Myers

and dismay.

The unfolded Oklahoma City newspaper was still gripped in her thin fingers. The picture of the grotesque pin covered three widths of column. Her eyeballs, bloated by shock, jerked epileptically from word to word as she read. The pin was of course the murder weapon. The newspaper report dwelt on it quite exclusively. It was not an ordinary pin by any means.

It measured twelve inches long.

to Miranda Loomis—belonging to Mrs. Barbara Doty who lived not four blocks away from her on Center Street. Miranda read every word of the two columns telling about the murder, unable not to. Not until she had finished the last word did the shock which bloated her eyeballs subside. Shock was replaced by unbelief, unbelief by doubt, doubt by frantic speculation.

Abruptly she laid the paper aside and rose from her chair.

She crossed the living room to a door she kept locked at all times even though she lived alone. She pulled up on the silver chain around her neck until a key emerged from her bosom and unlocked the door. She entered the room and crossed to a table. She picked up a small doll.

Her eyes narrowed while she did some mental arithmetic. The doll was about eight inches tall. Its face was remarkably similar to that of the murdered woman. There was a pin driven diagonally downward into its chest, and emerging slightly from the back. The pin was two inches long, slender, with a black bead perhaps a quarter of an inch in diameter for its head. It was obvious to her now that if the doll and pin were both increased to the size of Barbara Doty proportionately, the pin would be of exactly the dimensions given in the paper for the murder weapon!

"Oh dear," Miranda said.

She pursed her lips, trying to recall the exact time that she had stuck the pin in the doll. It had been yesterday afternoon, rather late. Four thirty-two or three, to be exact, since she had done it right after the grandfather clock struck the half hour. At the very outside, four-forty.

George Doty had found his wife's body at five o'clock when he arrived home. The coroner estimated the time of death at less than half an hour before that

time. Somewhere between four-thirty and a few minutes before five!

"Oh dear," Miranda repeated. "I didn't really mean it, Barbara. I hadn't the slightest idea."

Her eyes pleaded for forgiveness of the little doll. Her fingers fluttered toward the pin to pull it out, as though that might undo the harm that had been done. But Miranda couldn't quite bring herself to pull out the pin. *She might bleed*, Miranda thought, with vague pictures of police using the blood as evidence.

She started to put the doll back where it had been, then hesitated. The other dolls were watching her. She felt their eyes on her, glittering in accusation. She felt trapped.

It had been so much *fun*, making those dolls. Ever since she got the *book*. It had been a game, really. A delicious game. Make the dolls, being sure to include in their makeup something from the body of the person it represented. A strand of Barbara Doty's hair to make a wig. Fingernail parings for most of the others. Such delightful intrigue to get those things. It had given her a sense of power to pretend the book was right when she didn't really believe it could be. A collection of dolls representing almost everyone she knew. When any of her friends did something she didn't like, instead of having to be spiteful to their faces she could stick pins in

the doll and get satisfaction from her little game—with no harm done.

Take Hanna Godlove, for instance. Hanna didn't like her very well, and a month ago had made some catty remark Miranda couldn't even remember any more, but it had angered her at the time, so she had come home from the bridge club and twisted the right leg of the Hanna doll. "Take that, you old cat!" she had said. And it had felt good to administer punishment by proxy, secure in the feeling that it wouldn't really work like the book said it would. Hanna had been laid up for a week after that with a badly swollen right leg—but that had been caused by inflammatory rheumatism. The doctor had said so. So it was just coincidence. Served Hanna right, too. Miranda had thought of believing her twisting the doll's leg had caused it, but common sense squelched the idea with no trouble at all.

And Reverend Myers, who lived across the alley. Two weeks ago he had had a group in and hadn't invited her. All he would have had to have done was call to her across the fence and she would have been glad to have gone. He hadn't. So she had pinched the left foot of the Reverend Myers doll. His left foot had been so badly swollen the next day that he couldn't walk for three days without using a crutch. Gout, the doctor had said, so it couldn't have been because of

the doll. Miranda recalled sadly how fiendishly delightful it had been to pinch that little foot.

The Reverend Myers doll looked up at her accusingly from its position third from the right end in the long row of dolls sitting on the table with their backs against the wallpaper. For a second fear ate at her at the thought that maybe through the dolls these people all knew what she had done. But even the book didn't say that was possible.

"Oh dear," Miranda said, partly to herself, partly to her doll audience. "I had no idea. I've got a bull by the tail for sure." Very sadly she decided she would have to give up her hobby. She would have to get rid of the dolls—get rid of the dolls? How?

The vision rose in her mind. She was burning them in the incinerator, and all over Pembroke the people they represented were catching fire, burning to death.

"I don't dare destroy them!" she said aloud in trembling, horrified realization of just how truly she had a bull by the tail.

"There *must* be something," she moaned. She opened the table drawer and brought out the book. For an hour she searched, reading every word of the chapter on dolls. There wasn't a word on how to get rid of the dolls without the same thing happening to the persons. It was, she realized with a sick feeling, terrible. She threw the book back into the drawer

and glared at the dolls as though it were their fault.

REVEREND Augustus V. Myers lowered his powerful binoculars and nodded with great satisfaction. He was, he knew, quite safe from discovery behind the dusty window of his garage. He could only be seen by someone outside pressing their nose against the window and waiting until their eyes adjusted to the interior gloom—and that was quite unlikely, besides giving him ample warning in case it did happen. With the naked eye he could see into Miranda's secret room through an almost concealed gap in her back hedge. He had made that gap himself, gently breaking off twig after twig.

With the binoculars he could make out the minutest details of each doll, Miranda's facial contortions, and even the words her lips formed, to some extent.

No slightest meaning of anything had escaped him. Even when Miranda had brought out the book and spent an hour studying it he knew exactly what she was searching for. A way to get rid of the dolls without harming the people they represented. When she had put the book back into the drawer with forceful anger and glared at the dolls, he had sighed as one sighs after having spent months on something and finally sees the last piece fall into place.

He replaced the binoculars in

their case and pushed them well back on the high shelf against the wall where they wouldn't be seen, and went back to the house, limping slightly. His foot was still not entirely well.

In the kitchen Mary, his silent self-effacing wife, glanced up at him with a smile that faded as he went on through without noticing her. From long training she knew he must be "thinking about a sermon" and should therefore not be disturbed for any reason. And this time, for a change, his thoughts were actually on a sermon as he passed through the kitchen. It was to be perhaps the most important sermon of his entire life.

He never talked to Miranda directly except for casual brief exchanges at the door of the church after meetings were over, or a brief hello over the back gate if she happened to be in the back yard. But he often composed his sermons especially for her, and tossed them out over his Sunday morning audience with a great inner feeling of godlike superiority as he watched the faces of his listeners and saw in them the reflections of temporarily devout souls distorting his words into meanings peculiar to their own makeups, while Miranda ate up his words, never suspecting they were for her ears alone.

Reverend Myers closed his study door and sat down at his desk, his thin body erect, the professionally devout expression re-

maining on his face through a lifetime of habit. He was mentally reviewing the past.

It had been funny the way it all started almost a year ago. Why had he gone out to the garage that night? Oh yes—to hunt for a nail to fix a chair. Through the back window he had seen a light in the house of Miranda Loomis, elderly spinster. The hedge had obscured most of that lighted room in the spinster's house, but what it revealed bored its way into his startled eyes with sharp clearness. A profile of deliciously curved breast, flat stomach, unbelievably youthful. Miranda had taken a bath and was standing before her mirror, powdering her body. The vicarious thrill of seeing her thus had tingled his ramrod spine for days.

After that, Myers had developed the habit of going out to the garage often "to pray," as he told his wife. The binoculars had gone out one day when Mary was shopping, and remained there, hidden well back on a high shelf except when he was using them. Miranda might have blushed from the roots of her hair to the soles of her feet to learn how familiar Reverend Myers was with every square inch of her body, but she would never know. The Reverend smiled complacently at this thought. He had also become familiar with her every habit, and eventually with her innermost thoughts, for he was a shrewd student of human nature.

He might have attempted cultivating her toward an illicit series of affairs except for the streak of leonine playfulness in her make-up. This scared him, as it had every potential suitor, honorable or otherwise.

Then two things had transpired in rapid succession. Abel Harrison had died, leaving everything to his wife. She in turn, having no heirs, and troubled about what would become of the money if she died, had had a vision in which "the Lord" commanded her to leave everything to Reverend Myers—which she did, in her will. That was the first event. Mrs. Harrison had proudly told him what she had done. Reverend Myers had immediately taken mental possession of the money as his own, and quickly come to resent Mrs. Harrison's continued existence as an obstacle to his taking actual possession.

The second thing had been quite accidental. Miranda had been in the back yard, mowing the lawn, when he had come out the back door to take a shortcut down the alley to the post office. They had exchanged greetings casually, and when she learned he was headed for the post office she had asked him to wait, and had run into the house to get a letter for him to mail.

"Here's the money to get the money order," she had said.

It had been an order for books which were checked off on a mim-

eographed sheet. On the way to the postoffice he had looked over the list. Good books very reasonably priced. Miranda had ordered three books of fiction. Suddenly Reverend Myer's eyes, skimming the complete list of books, had settled on a book which was familiar to him. A book on demonology of which there was a copy in his own library.

At the time, there had been only a feeling, a half-formed notion. Coupled with it was the certainty that if the book came with the ones Miranda had ordered, she would keep it rather than return it, enjoying the feeling of having cheated the book company through what she would feel quite certain was a mistake on their part. The book had cost him eighty-five. He had merely checked it off on the order sheet and added eight-fifty of his own money to the amount Miranda had given him for the money order.

The very next Sunday he had preached a sermon on demonology, painting it as dark continent superstition designed as a psychological outlet for hatreds, rather than as something that worked. He had really done a good job of it. Shortly after that, Miranda had transferred her hobby of crocheting to a hobby of secretly making dolls matching her acquaintances.

There had been the day when Miranda crossed the alley and knocked at the back door "to use the bathroom." Hers, it seemed,

was "out of order" but the plumber was to be there in another hour. And she had stolen some of his hair from his hairbrush. She had felt quite daring, and he, knowing the reason for her visit, had chuckled after she had gone. He chuckled now, then settled down to serious consideration of his sermon.

It would have to follow a theme of—oh yes—holding a bull by the tail. Evil stepping in and taking possession until one is unable to let go because it will turn and destroy one. Greater and greater evil, until—how would he word it? It would have to be very explicit. He was going to have to put Miranda into a frame of mind such that when she found a needle stuck into the Mable Harrison doll she would be convinced she had stuck it there herself

BARBARA DOTY'S funeral had been Saturday afternoon. Miranda had gone—forced herself to go—because it would have started talk if she didn't. After the funeral she hurried home instead of going to the cemetery. At about the time she imagined Barbara's casket being lowered into the ground, she buried the Barbara doll in the back yard in a casket that had originally been a miniature cedar chest holding five pounds of chocolates. The doll's grave was directly across the alley from Reverend Myer's garage.

Reverend Myers had preached a very good funeral service as always. Miranda liked the ramrod little preacher and always had. He was so—she didn't know how to express it even to herself—so discerning. Sometimes he seemed to know her innermost thoughts better than she knew them herself. Often he seemed to be speaking directly to her in his Sunday morning sermons. Of course he wasn't, but it took a good man to create that effect. Probably that was why some of his congregation didn't like him.

After the little funeral service in the back yard, Miranda returned to the house, conscious of the fact that there was a whole afternoon and evening with nothing to do. She was afraid to finish the Harvey Miller doll. And making the dolls had occupied most of her time for months. She spent an hour in the doll room worrying about the dolls. It wouldn't do for anything to happen to any of them. They were so vulnerable. If the house caught on fire she would have to rescue them. She worried about the plaster on the ceiling falling on them. She worried about their construction. Would one of the little glass bead eyes fall out? She didn't dare investigate how securely they were fastened. An epidemic of eyes falling out all over town would really put the fat in the fire! Unexplainable black eyes from her poking around would be just as bad.

After dinner she reluctantly brought out a table cloth she had been crocheting—it seemed years ago! Crocheting, she discovered, had lost its meaning. It had been so much fun making the dolls. A tear streaked down her nose.

Finally she went to bed, but not to sleep. In the dark she could imagine the dolls waking up, moving about, in their room. They might hurt themselves. She strained her ears and it seemed to her she could hear tiny feet pattering, small voices chattering. She told herself it was just her imagination, but eventually she had to get up and go see. She would lie still a little while longer.

Suddenly she sat bolt upright. She had been asleep! Something had happened! She listened, and the silence was sinister. She could *feel* the fright that kept the dolls so quiet, *feel* their terror. Something had happened to one of them. She felt it.

With trembling fingers she groped for the lamp cord, feeling it avoid her clutching fingers several times before she could get it. Light flooded her bedroom. Comforting blessed light. Her alarm clock showed it to be three-thirty. Stumbling into her bedroom slippers and struggling into her robe, she opened her bedroom door. The rest of the house was so silent, so dark. She hesitated, her eyes searching the gloom, her ears tuned to the faintest of creaks. The terror did not subside. Some-

thing was wrong with the dolls.

Abruptly she stepped into the darkness, skirting chairs until she reached the living room wall switch. The lights went on, and she felt safer. Now she could go to the dolls' room, open the door, and reach inside to turn on the light. Her fingers were more steady as she extracted the key from her bosom and unlocked the door. She opened it just far enough to slip her arm in and reach the wall switch. With the lights on, she opened the door.

The dolls, sitting with their backs to the wall on the table, stared at her with glittering interest in which fear and hope was intermixed.

She felt the draft swish at her nightgown and robe. Her eyes turned toward the window that was open. It was open hardly more than six inches. But it shouldn't be open at all! How did it get open?

Then she saw the doll. It was sprawled on the floor as though it had entered through the window and collapsed. The sharp point of a pin was visible in the center of its back. It was on its face, its arms reaching out as though it had tried to crawl forward.

She did not need to turn the doll over to know which one it was. It was the Barbara Doty doll, which she had buried in a casket in the back yard.

With a low moan Miranda fainted.

REVEREND MYERS felt quite good. His excellent spirits were reflected in his bright eyes and alert bearing, as he stepped to the pulpit and cleared his throat preparatory to delivering his Sunday sermon. He surveyed his audience impartially so that his keen appraisal of Miranda's appearance wouldn't be noticed. She looked positively haggard. Her eyes were bloodshot. He directed his eyes at George Bledsoe as he smiled, and George smiled back, thinking the smile had been intended for him.

It had been only supreme luck that he and Mary had arrived home from the cemetery in time for him to see Miranda putting away the shovel. Immediately he had surmised its purpose, and had gone to the garage before dark to study Miranda's back yard. It hadn't taken long to find the small rectangle of fresh earth near the hedge. Mary suspected nothing, of course, when he went out to the garage "to pray" as she was retiring for the night. He had done it so many times it was a time-honored custom with him. And right now, of course, he would be praying for the safe keeping of Barbara Doty's soul.

With his hands he dug into the fresh earth and encountered the small wooden box. He wiped his hands with his handkerchief and took out the doll. He then covered the empty box with dirt so that it was as it had been.

His first plan was to leave it in

plain sight on Miranda's lawn. He did so, and returned to the house and went to bed. Only then did he realize that his plan might precipitate things ahead of time if someone other than Miranda discovered the doll.

Mary was tossing restlessly. He lay still with fevered impatience until long after she slept. Then, careful not to waken her, he got out of bed and slipped into his bathrobe. In the kitchen he lit a match and looked at the clock. It was three twenty-five.

Seconds later he was leaping lightly over the gate to Miranda's back yard. The doll was still where he had left it. He had two alternative plans. If the window to the doll room was locked he would place the doll inside the back door screen.

But the window wasn't locked. He slid the window open about six inches and reached in with the doll. He could touch the floor. He carefully arranged the doll so that it would seem to have collapsed after entering the room through the window. He had made a certain amount of noise in opening the window. He saw light streaming from Miranda's bedroom window as he retreated across the lawn. He skirted the shadows and made it back to bed safely.

And now, as he took in Miranda's haggard expression, he could well understand how effective his little tableau had been on her.

He cleared his throat again, and

began his prayer. It was a long one, hinting at the subject of the sermon to follow. After the prayer there was a final hymn. He stood erect, a disciple of light, as the congregation sang "When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there." He was sure that to his flock he appeared utterly confident of being up yonder when the roll was called, but in his inner thoughts he was quite sure it was all bunk.

The audience sat down at the end of the song. A hush descended over the church.

"The topic of my sermon is," he said in a clear voice, "murder." He began with the First Murder. He went on through the Bible, building up the picture. He digressed momentarily to mention that "The Savior has said, 'Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.' But it was in reference to a pitiful woman who had committed adultery. A sin not condemned enough, but might it not be possible that this murderer in our midst is a person who might not have sunk to the dregs of murder if she—or he—had lesser sins to atone for, such as adultery?" His eyes flicked mockingly over Miranda as he quickly obliterated his remark with another statement.

That had been spite. To be so familiar with Miranda's body and yet never to dare make that familiarity more concrete. It had been revenge. He felt good as he went into the important part of his sermon. He struck a psycho-

logical tone as he discussed Guilt and how it possesses one, driving a wedge until that person becomes literally of two minds, one the victim of the other, *the weaker part often not even knowing what the criminal part did*. He strung in trite phrases about the powers of darkness and the devil.

It was a tight balance he was holding. Miranda must not go to the police and confess until after Mable Harrison was dead. And then she *must* confess—before the finger of suspicion pointed at the only one who benefited materially from Mrs. Harrison's death.

Toward the end of the sermon he saw Miranda looking around her. He could sense her thoughts. She was telling herself that to confess would mean the end of everything. These friends would turn away from her.

Reverend Myers ended his sermon with a prayer that rang with thankfulness. Things were Just Right. But, he thought as he lifted his eyes Heavenward and ended his prayer with Amen, he would miss watching Miranda at her evening bath.

Still, he reflected as he went up the aisle during the closing organ song to be at the doors to shake hands with his congregation, with the hundred thousand or so he would soon have, it wouldn't be half bad. He could resign his pastorate to "become a foreign missionary," get rid of Mary, and be on top of the world.

"Thank you," Miranda said when she shook hands with him. "Thank you." *Everyone* had liked the sermon.

REVEREND MYERS had every detail of his final crime thought out carefully. Miranda always went shopping for groceries Monday afternoon at three o'clock. Twice he had boldly "called on her" when she was out, entering the house with a dime store pass key. The key worked on the door to the doll room too. Miranda would have been shocked to learn that Woolworths sold keys that would open every door in her house.

She was usually gone a full hour, returning with two large shopping bags of groceries—enough to last her until Friday.

So, on Monday, he waited until she had been gone a full ten minutes, in case she might have forgotten something and have to return for it. Then he boldly went to her back door and entered the house. Unlocking the doll room, he went in. He grinned at his own doll, and silently formed the greeting, "Hi."

The window he had opened Saturday night was closed. The Barbara Doty doll was still on the floor. She had not been able to force herself to touch it.

Reverend Myers picked it up and withdrew the pin, then replaced the doll the way it had been. He stood with the pin in his

hand, studying the dolls on the table until he found the Mable Harrison doll. He picked it up and smiled triumphantly into its bright glass eyes, holding the pin in front of it for a moment before thrusting it into the cloth breast. He then arranged the doll in the center of the table in a posture of death.

Now, suddenly, his expression became serious. The unpleasant part was yet to come. Barbara Doty had been the first person he had ever killed. It hadn't been difficult. Fear had paralyzed her when she saw the giant pin and the murder light in his eyes. He anticipated no trouble now. Just the same, murder wasn't pleasant. It was disagreeable. However, there would only be Mable, and then, later, Mary, in some lonely place where she would never be found. After that he would never have to kill anyone again. It would be a relief.

He recrossed Miranda's backyard as boldly as he had come. No risk at all here. If anyone saw him they would think it just a neighborly visit or a professional one, as her minister.

He entered his own kitchen wearing an uneasy frown. "Mary," he said, "I was just over to see Miranda. She isn't home. I've been worried about her lately. Yesterday in church I noticed that she looks ill. I'm going out into the country to make a few calls. I wonder if you would go over when

she gets back and stay with Miranda—have dinner with her or have her over here for dinner."

"Of course, Augy," Mary said dutifully. "When will you be home?"

"After dark," he said. "Shortly after dark." He kissed Mary with gentle affection. "Don't take no for an answer," he said insistently. "I feel that Miranda needs company to cheer her up, at least."

And of course, company would prevent her from going into the doll room before dark and seeing the pin stuck into the Mable Harrison doll—perhaps prevent her from seeing it until morning, which would be ideal.

He made three calls before dark, turning down the three invitations to stay for dinner. Building up an alibi was of course unnecessary. No accusing finger would ever point his way. Still, just in case

A last minute thought almost paralyzed him with fright. Suppose Mable Harrison had a guest? Perhaps an overnight guest? It would be impossible to get into Miranda's house and take the pin out of the doll. It worried him as he parked his car off the highway within walking distance of the Harrison house and brought the foot-long pin out from its place of concealment under the back seat.

Faint cracks of light seeped past the blinds as he went up to the porch. He skirted the porch and went to a side window to peek

in. The feeble old lady sat in a rocker, her eyes closed, slowly rocking. She had aged remarkably since the death of her husband. It would really be an act of mercy, Reverend Myers thought, looking at the pathetic, lonely figure.

Wasting no more time, he boldly went up the steps and knocked on the door. The foot-long pin was resting comfortably inside his suit coat, its two inch black head making only a little bulge

MARY was so wonderful, Miranda wondered why she didn't cultivate the minister's wife more. It had been so much fun to get out the Spode and serve a nice little dinner for two. She had been *herself*. Her thoughts supplied the answers, she didn't cultivate Mary more because Reverend Myers repelled her strangely, and because Mary herself was too subdued; and she immediately brushed the answers out of conscious thought as being untrue. Why, Reverend Myers was the finest preacher she had ever listened to! And Mary was just—not assertive of herself. Mary had gone back home shortly after dark because Augy was due home almost any minute. Miranda had washed the Spode in hot sudsy water. It had looked so beautiful there that she had impulsively decided to wash the whole set. That had taken two full hours, including scrubbing the china closet and putting the Spode back

on display behind its glass doors. It had come all the way from Philadelphia before she was born, and not a piece had been so much as chipped during her lifetime. She expanded with pride at the thought. Tired and happy, she went to bed and slept with never a thought of the dolls.

She awoke with a feeling that her dreams had been troubled. In the living room the gleaming Spode behind sparkling glass doors dispelled the feeling, bringing back the happiness of the night before. She had her breakfast of tea and toast and did the dishes. Then, for the first time that morning, she thought of the dolls. It was a friendly sociable thought. She must go in and see them, make sure they were all right.

Humming happily, she crossed the living room, lifting out the key on its chain, and unlocked the door to the doll room. When she stepped inside, her smile of greeting already turned on, the silent, still-life tableau struck into her soul with the combined force of etching acid and the atom bomb. Reverend Myers' sermon, the vague feeling of having had troubled dreams when she woke up, the other and unhurt dolls sitting upright with their backs against the wall, their bead eyes looking straight ahead like—like people looked in church. Except that the Barbara Doty doll was still sprawled on its face under the



The tableau struck her with atom-bomb force.

window—the pin that had been in it gone!

Miranda's tortured eyes jerked back to the Mable Harrison doll. It was the same pin then. In her sleep she must have come in here, taken the pin out of the Barbara Doty doll and stuck it into the Mable Harrison doll. But why? Why Mable? Or had she just taken one at random? That must have been it, of course. These poor people. How they must have suffered as her groping fingers touched one, then another, before picking a victim. She closed her eyes and could *remember* doing it. It *must* be a memory. She *had* done it. And now—

"Oh dear," Miranda said frenziedly, turning and running out of the room. She got to the front door before she realized that what she had been about to do was impossible. She couldn't run to Mable Harrison's and save her. She was dead already. Murdered. The realization of this hit her in the stomach. She sank to the floor in the open doorway, her eyes dry and staring.

It was a long time later that she stirred, and slowly got to her feet. She closed the front door without being aware of doing so. She went into the kitchen and automatically fixed a pot of tea.

Afterward, she went to her bedroom and laid out the clothes she intended to wear. With stiff clumsy fingers she patiently dressed. She put on her best hat as a final

touch. And automatically, as though she were going on one of her periodic trips to Oklahoma City, she went around the house, making sure the faucets were shut tight in the bathroom and kitchen, the windows all locked, the main electric switch on the back porch shut off.

Locking the front door, she walked down the flagstone path to the sidewalk and turned toward town without a backward glance, her purse clutched against her by her two gloved slim hands.

It didn't seem strange to her to walk up the steps into the police station, even though it was perhaps the one place in Pembroke where she had never before set foot. The varnished floor and varnished doors and varnished chairs and varnished desks were somehow just what they should be. Her footsteps echoed loudly as she walked into the reception room. She watched Tom Godlove's bored expression change to pleased surprise. "Well, hello! What brings you here, Miss Loomis?" he said cordially.

"Is Chief Williams in, T—Tom?" she asked. She bit her lip. Tom had carried her books to school for her for three years in grade school.

"Well, sure, Miranda, but he's awful busy. There's been another murder this morning."

"I know," Miranda said. "Mable Harrison. I *must* see Chief Williams for a minute."

Tom's eyes narrowed. "I'll see," he said. "Be back in a minute." He left her standing in the center of the room and went down the back hall and down into the basement police workshop which was laboratory, morgue room, and shooting gallery, as the occasion required. "Miranda Loomis is upstairs," he said. "She wants to see you about something. And she knows already about Mable Harrison. News travels fast, but, and I hate to say it, not *that* fast. She dressed up to come down here. I hate to say it, but she must have known about Mrs. Harrison at least an hour ago."

Chief Williams looked at the two Oklahoma City detectives, a slow smile growing on his face. "Maybe this is the break we've been waiting for," he said. "She lives across the alley from Myers. 'I'll bet she's seen something.'"

"That would be just enough extra to do it," one of the detectives said. "The *only* thing we have now is Scotty Marlow's testimony that Myers got that pair of black glass balls from him six months ago. Let's go up and see what she has to tell you."

IT had been such a relief, once she got started, for Miranda to tell everything. At first Chief Williams had been interested, then suddenly he became indignant; but those nice detectives from Oklahoma City had shut him up and urged her to go on. They had

seemed to believe her.

After she had confessed everything, she and Chief Williams and the two detectives had gone to her house, and she had shown them the doll room just as she had left it. She had been so sure that then they would believe. Instead, one of the detectives had gone to the back window and looked out, and asked over his shoulder, "That Myers' house across the alley the other side of that little garage?" When she had stammered, "Why, yes," he had left the house without a word. She had caught glimpses of him prowling around. He was gone from sight for quite a while. When he returned he was carrying a brown leather case like those for binoculars with him.

"We've got it all now," he said grimly when he came into the doll room. He looked at the dolls, then patted her gently on the shoulder. "We won't need any of this, Miss Loomis," he said. "We've got enough now without it." And Chief Williams, looking like a guilty boy, growled, "Just keep quiet about this; Miranda. I won't ever say anything, and nobody ever need know."

"But but but—" Miranda stammered as the three men strode purposefully out the back door and toward Reverend Myers' house.

And then, in an atmosphere of unreality, she had seen Reverend Myers run out of his house struggling into his suit coat. He had

jumped into his car. The three men were trying to stop him, but the car sped away. One of the Oklahoma City detectives brought a large revolver into sight and pointed it. The other touched him and shook his head. Then all three men ran back toward her, veered around the house; and a second after she heard Chief Williams' police car come to life the peace of Pembroke was shattered by the wail of the siren.

Miranda was left quite confused and more than a little bewildered. She carefully locked the doll room with an unsure feeling that she must preserve it as it was for evidence when they tried her for the murders. The binoculars—that detective had found them in Reverend Myers' garage. Reverend Myers must have watched her and known about the dolls, and the police were trying to catch him because he didn't want to testify against her. That was it, of course.

Miranda went to the kitchen and made some tea without taking off her hat, not even aware that she was still wearing it. Or perhaps she had to remain ready for the police when they came back to arrest her.

There was a timid knock at the door. It was Mary, her eyes inflamed, her face streaked with tears. "Come in, dear," Miranda said quickly. "I've just made some tea. You must have some." Mary had wanted to rush into her arms and have a good cry. Miranda pre-

vented this by industriously getting another cup and pouring the tea.

Mary was talking, her words mixed up with soft sobs. Miranda tried to listen, but she was waiting for the return of the police. Poor Mary didn't seem to realize. She was talking as though the police were after her Augy for the murders. She didn't understand, poor dear.

"... he killed Mrs. Harrison last night while I was here with you . . . I knew about the black glass balls and wondered about them when I saw that picture in the paper . . ."

"Yes yes, my dear," Miranda said sympathetically. "Drink your tea and everything will be all right—" And abruptly the meaning of what Mary had been saying clicked into Miranda's mind. It was impossible, but it made sense. She could see, suddenly, that that was what the police believed. With sudden conviction Miranda *knew* that Reverend Myers had killed Barbara Doty and Mable Harrison . . .

"... knew he had been watching you for a long time, but I didn't dare let him know I knew . . . sneaked out once and opened the garage door a crack and saw him in the dark, looking at your bathroom window with his binoculars. He would have hated me if he had known I knew . . ."

. . . but she herself was guilty. The book hinted at Evil spirits

actually doing the work of inflicting the punishment done to the devil doll to the person. Evil spirits must have taken possession of Reveren—"My *bathroom*?" Reality suddenly came into focus sharply for Miranda.

Mary nodded mutely. "Almost every night when you took your bath, for months."

"For *months*?"

"With the binoculars."

Miranda blushed from the roots of her hair to the soles of her feet at the mental image of Reverend Myers at his garage window, seeing her as she admired her *nakedness* while she powdered her body. With *binoculars*.

And then, abruptly, her skin became bloodless and white from a terrible rage against this—this *man*. The Spode cup dropped from her fingers, breaking itself and the saucer. She pushed back from the table. Mary was forgotten. The broken Spode was unnoticed. A *man* had seen her, gloated over her, stared at her lewdly. It was *awful*. It was—

She was running toward the door to the doll room. The key was in her hand. Her impulse had been only to get alone, be alone in her shame. She found herself inside the doll room, the echo of the slammed door still in her ears. Her back was to the door.

But she wasn't alone. The Reverend Myers doll looked at her with glittering lewd eyes, its ramrod back so erect, so stiff, so—so pious.

So *that* was how he had seemed to know so much about her, even her innermost thoughts!

In a frenzy of hate she rushed to the table and picked up the Reverend Myers doll and clenched it in her slim fist, pulling off its legs, its arms, its head, and then plucking at its torso until it was completely reduced to rags and tatters.

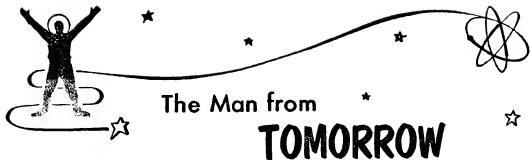
And then she sank to the floor, all the frustrations and unfulfilled dreams of her life welling up from the depths of her soul, to mingle with the hot tears

. . . while fifteen miles out of Pembroke on highway 66 Chief Williams and the two Oklahoma City detectives stared in frustrated anger and puzzlement at the mystery that confronted them. Reverend Myers' car had suddenly gone out of control—almost as if the driver had fainted or something. The car had left the highway and bounced across a ditch, turning over several times before coming to a stop on its side.

The car itself was damaged very little. The steering wheel was intact. The windows weren't even cracked.

But Reverend Myers—it looked as though some invisible hand had plucked off his head and tossed it down under the dashboard where its dead eyes looked up at them glittering like huge beads, had torn legs and arms loose, plucked huge chunks of flesh from the dismembered torso.

That's what it looked like . . .



The Man from **TOMORROW**

PREDICTIONS this month are going to be almost entirely from our readers. If you have any desire to go on record with a prediction, why not send in your contributions to this department, c/o Ray Palmer, Amherst, Wisconsin?

Says *Dr. Marcus Fite* of Kellogg, Idaho: — Someday soon we will find out where the flying saucers are coming from—and my prediction is that they will be from inside our planet, and not from outer space.

William D. Healy, Jr., Bronx, N. Y.: — Atomic power plants will revolutionize the world. Electric power plants now in use will be obsolete. Home heating facilities will be controlled by atomic power plants on the east and west coasts.

Weather will be controlled by atomic power, abolishing hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes and extremes of temperature, instead maintaining a balance from 78° to 88°.

We will be able to travel in outer space and visit Mars and other planets in the near future, as soon

as a space station is built for refueling purposes, which will also be a means of maintaining world peace.

We will have visitors from other planets within the next twenty years.

Within the next ten years there will be heating elements under roads which will melt snow and make winter travel safe.

We will be in a third world war with Russia, which will break out in China.

J. Vincent Kramer, of New York City, says: — Stalin's death was a put up job to dupe the wishy-washy Allies and Democracies. He will return alive by April, 1954, and visit America in his chariot of victory.

Russia and "friends" will successfully invade America between now and April, 1954. No later, though. It will last about two years.

Stalin will escape to Russia in 1955 where he will be assassinated by his sons. His sons will find refuge in Armenia.

Turkey will be completely destroyed within twenty-six months.

Peace in Korea will not come. This temporary halt gives enemy time to rebuild and strike again, and soon.

The Beria episode is a trap conceived by Malenkov to put us off-guard. As Hess caused Germany's downfall, Beria will cause ours.

Tito, when he becomes strong enough, will go through Europe in a matter of days, and cross the English Channel to destroy England at Stalin's given signal.

In 1954 a major automobile manufacturing company will present to the public its new auto styles with a revolutionary new type of engine which guarantees the buyer 50 miles on a gallon of gas.

Unless you can present Mystic articles with facts, figures and dates, you will be forced to suspend publication by April, 1954 if not before.

Your editor says: — All Mystic articles present facts, figures and dates. So we're safe. We predict, however, that many magazines, faced with continuing sales resistance, will fail. We predict that some of our own magazines will fail, but that they will be replaced with new ones.

We predict that Stalin is dead to stay dead. Also that Hitler is in the same category.

Beria is not in the United States, as some contend, but will be tried in Russia as predicted, and found guilty. He does not constitute a danger to our security.

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(Please mention MYSTIC Magazine)

MYSTERY IN THE NEWS...

NOW comes one of those "unexplained-away" saucer sightings in Europe. On October 9, 1953, at nine o'clock in the morning, Captain Peter Fletcher, of Putney, England, took his Elizabethan flight ship off London Airport, and accompanied by First Officer R. L. Lemon of Iver, Bucks, flew straight into an adventure that can now be numbered among those embarrassing ones that make people lift their eyebrows every time the Air Force Intelligence arms declare that flying saucers are "illusions."

Here is Captain Fletcher's story:

It was so clear that when we were over the English Channel, we could see aircraft over the airport at Orly, 100 miles away. We were enroute for Paris on a course of about 150 degrees. London radar said that an aircraft was overtaking me on my left.

This aircraft, a Constellation flying some 50 knots faster than ourselves, passed on ahead and a few minutes later reached its cruising altitude of 13,500 feet and was in a position immediately ahead of me and above. At this stage the sun's light was reflected to me from the top surface of the wing, making the lit surface very clear to see, while a darker shadow etched in the lower part. This is important in view of later ob-

servations.

It was then that I noticed the "flying saucer." It was apparently another aircraft above the Constellation and a little away to the left, and it seemed to have similar sun reflections. Bearing in mind the size of all airliners flying around Europe, I judged this other aircraft was flying at approximately 20,000 feet and anywhere from the same distance as the Constellation to 20 miles further away.

It became apparent there was a difference between the craft. Now 30 miles ahead of me, the Constellation's irregularities of fuselage, engines and tail could still be distinguished breaking up the reflecting surface of the top wing. But it was quite different with our "flying saucer." The intensity of the reflected light from the top surface remained absolutely steady. The top reflecting surface was smooth and unbroken. It was more highly polished than with a normal aircraft's "skin." It had the appearance of two shallow saucers with their rims together. Its relative position to ourselves remained, unlike the Constellation, completely unchanged for the whole 30 minutes that we observed it. It appeared to be still.

We have no doubt whatsoever that the object was solid, having a shape approximately that of an

aircraft wing, and that it was constructed of metal similar to that used in aircraft except that it was much more highly polished.

* * *

On July 6, 1944, Ringling Brothers Circus' tent burned to the ground, taking the lives of 168 persons. That was more than nine years ago. Yet, today, a little girl of about six years old is still unidentified, although she was not burned, only asphyxiated. In all this time, no one has missed a lovable little girl. No parents, no friends, no relatives, no school-mates, nobody! As a result there is a tombstone bearing the legend "Little Miss 1565" (from the morgue slab on which she had lain) in Northwood Cemetery, just outside Hartford, Connecticut. An incredible fact. But true.

If your little girl had gone to the circus that day, wouldn't you have missed her by now, and reported it? Wouldn't somebody have wondered what had become of her? Mystery beyond comprehension.

* * *

Out in Kansas City, Missouri, a strange series of seven "bombings" has occurred. However, in every case, there is the terrific blast, a strange smell, and no bomb fragments. The latest explosion was in full daylight on the 11th floor of the 24-story Bryant building, blowing out two walls, a door and the street window of a doctor's observation room. It is as

though the city is being bombed from the astral realms, so far as any visible evidence is concerned.

* * *

Another crashed plane, and no bodies! Out near Ketchikan, Alaska the wreckage of a plane in which a wealthy New Mexico oil man and four passengers disappeared a month ago was discovered in brushy country. A ground party searched the area exhaustively, and found no trace of any of the bodies. Where do they go, we wonder? And so many of them. Incident after incident—none ever explained. Are flying saucers kidnapping them in mid-air?

* * *

It was all a good joke apparently. But there are some in the NBC studios in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York who wonder about the telephone call that interrupted the Tex McCrary and Jinx Falkenburg breakfast show. "Stop talking about flying saucers or your planet will be annihilated." The caller, speaking in a high, thin voice, professed to be from "outer space."

Strangely enough a prominent book publisher brought out a book professing to prove the saucers are from "outer space" at the same time. If there is a connection, we heartily disapprove of it.

* * *

Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 8, 1953. Atomic scientists have "written off" atomic bomb radiation as a "serious killer" in atomic

blasts, and "from a common sense standpoint there is absolutely no danger from radiation 90 seconds after the bomb goes off." Captain H. C. Kinne, officer in charge of the technical training group at the Sandia Special Weapons base added, "a minute and a half after you see the white light of the blast, the radiation hazard on the ground is over. If you go into ground zero directly under the burst . . . there is no way to hurt yourself anymore."

Unfortunately we do not have thirty or forty more pages in this magazine to quote news clippings of the past five years which make this latest "news" the most astounding ever printed in any newspaper anywhere, but there are those readers who will remember such things as Bikini test warships being sunk in 6 miles of water at intervals "because of deadly radioactivity which would last possibly for centuries, or even thousands of years" and smaller items about barrels used at the Bikini test arriving in an American port a year after the blast, and being discovered so "hot" that they were immediately taken back out to sea and sunk out of harm's way.

What are they trying to do, scare the hell out of us who can remember *yesterday's* paper as well as read today's?

* * *

Matt Weinstock, writing in the Los Angeles *Daily News* for Oc-

tober 7, 1953, tells of a man named Truman Bethurum, 519 N. Gertrude Ave., Redondo Beach, who, in June 1952, was sleeping in his truck when he was awakened by an unintelligible mumbling. He saw eight or ten men all five feet or less in height, dark hair, eyes and complexions, and dressed in what seemed to be Greyhound bus drivers' uniforms. They escorted him to a space ship parked nearby and introduced him to Aura Rahnes, captain of the 32-man crew. She told him she was from the planet Clarion and conducted him on a tour of the ship, which was of burnished stainless steel, 300 feet in diameter, and 18 feet thick at the center with a 3-foot metal rim around the outer edge.

* * *

Father Francis J. Connell, dean of the sacred theology school of the Catholic University of America in Washington says the flying saucers could quite possibly be from another world and carry beings endowed with supernatural abilities. Other "states" may exist where intelligent beings may "perceive the glory of God."

We wonder what the word "states" can be construed to suggest? Any beings on another world, like ours, would have "natural" abilities, but if they are from a "state" where supernatural abilities exist, it might be reasonable to assume the good Father was hinting at "realms" beyond the physical.

There are indeed interesting things in the news these days!

* * *

An ex-president and a governor, among others, were recently subpoenaed to appear before a Congressional committee. The governor refused. Which brings up a question: Can anyone refuse to honor a subpoena of this kind, and if one person can, can another? And would the consequences be equal in both cases?

Many occultists hold to the firm belief that our country was founded in liberty by the inspiration of other "realms" than the physical, acting upon such persons as Tom Paine, Jefferson, and so on. Sometimes, as we read the news these days, we wonder if inspiration from another sort of "realm" isn't making itself felt.



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The SEANCE CIRCLE...

Letters from the Undead

Dear Ed:

Many thanks for my copy of MYSTIC which arrived on the twelfth. Such speed seemed phenomenal, as I expected to wait at least three weeks! Result: visions of mail being moved by flying saucer or teleportation!

Did I like MYSTIC? Gosh. If my brain needed mechanism like a calculating machine—by this time the gears would be stripped!

Seriously, I'm glad to have sent in for a subscription. Your new venture should adequately replace OTHER WORLDS, though many of us will recall the "capricious Old Woman" with regret.

Ed, your editorials are unique. You have the knack of "striking a melodious chord" in some and "hitting a resounding discord" in other people via your remarks. Do you intend this, or does it "just come natural"?

Ray, your remark about the bat simply must be challenged. Is there anything in or on the earth or ocean that light does not effect? Sunlight does have certain effects on the anatomy of *all* creatures. This is not a superstition!

Recently my fifteen year old son asked, "Mom, why do you read those trashy astrology magazines?" I answered, "Son, to me the subject of astrology is interesting, and I like to read the maga-

zines." I was then lectured at length to the tune of: "Astrology is a superstition and the stars and planets have *no influence whatever* upon life, human or otherwise!" His science teacher had expounded this fact! Also the science book.

Thus, it became necessary to explain that Son had probably misunderstood the science lesson to some extent, since it is well known by everyone, including scientists, that our sun, which is a star, has great influence upon life, as does the moon, which science says is responsible for the tides, etc. There are also plants which bloom only in the moonlight, and nocturnal animals. It was necessary to make him "see" that everyone and everything reacts to its environment; ergo, environment has effect upon everything and everyone.

This "closed mind" attitude is something that must be overcome in the young, as well as the old. It seems to me that this retards civilization and progress more than anything else.

MYSTIC can fill a great need in the world today. But let us search for the light, as expressed in right understanding, right thought, right action.

Murriel H. Ellis

Lancaster, Ohio

First, my editorials come "nat-

ural." Sometimes I wonder myself where the words come from. I am always amazed that they cause such a furore. Your attitude toward your son is a wonderful one, and it's too bad all youngsters don't have a thoughtful mind at home to correct the impressions they get so fleetingly (yet lastingly) in their outside contact. Thinking is not done in a classroom. Only parrotting. The instructor parrots the same lesson day after day, and he himself did not reason it out to begin with. The student parrots it after him, and carries it home. It goes into his life as a bit of repetition, and the majority of lives are lived sans thinking. I am constantly being amazed at grown adults who have never thought an original thought in their whole lives. And if you give them an original thought, it sends them fleeing in terror back to their books, to chatter at you from the safety of their nests, parrotting the book in defense. If we could only teach our children to challenge their instructor's every word with: "How do you know?"

How silly it would seem to find the same answer forthcoming every time: "I read it in a book," or "somebody told me," Hearsay!

I will grant that there is a lot of teaching going on in which the laboratory technique is used. But it is done too late. The "learning by doing" should begin in the earliest grades. A book is no "demonstration." It is not "self-evident." It

is, used as a teacher, a curse. A text-book is a guide, a "suggester," a signpost pointing to performance in the past, and the method of repeating the performance, and thus proving itself. And how many textbooks have we today which fail the test of performance in the light of more advanced experiment? Any text-book on the Earth's atmosphere, written thirty years ago, is a farce. It is 99% wrong, by demonstration. Ask any rocket man or aviation expert, or meteorologist.

Our youngsters haven't got closed minds, they have "typed" minds. They are conditioned. MYSTIC (and myself) likes to "un-condition" them.—Rap.

* * *

Dear Ray:

Would like to know just who writes those introductions to each of the stories! They really make the stories much more interesting by letting us know the idea behind the story. Also the introductions are very thought-provoking in themselves. Keep up the good work. MYSTIC is a really great magazine, and I am glad to be one of your subscribers.

Jerry Tinkham,
Seattle, Wash.

I do, Jerry. I've always thought that the reason people do things is more interesting than the things they do. I've read many stories where the author was so obsessed with telling his story, he forgot to make it obvious what he was

aiming at. And another reason is to give the reader who doesn't care for the subject a chance to skip it if he so desires. Strange reason for an editor, isn't it? But we're not so cocky we think everything we present is perfect.—Rap.

* * *

Dear Sirs:

Congratulations on your new magazine, especially on the article "I travelled in a Flying Saucer" by Orfeo Matthew Angelucci as told to Paul M. Vest. It is regarding the veracity of the article that I am writing you.

I notice that it appeared in your section titled "True MYSTIC Adventures" and also, according to your notes at the beginning of the article, that Mr. Angelucci "declares it to be true," though you yourselves make no statement backing up his in that respect.

On reading that article, I became pretty well convinced that it was true, so much so that I went to the trouble of setting up a horoscope for the first contact Mr. Angelucci made with the other planetary visitors, and also passed the article on to several friends.

The horoscope indicated the truth of the article in an amazing way, but one of the friends showed me certain words in "Editorially Speaking," same issue, which seem to indicate everything in your magazine to be pure fiction. Those words are: "This is a magazine of fiction. The stories you will read herein are not based on reason or

knowledge." And, later, "Fiction, all of it—."

My friend takes the view that, taking these words into consideration, Mr. Angelucci's declaration of the truth of the experience and his intention of bringing it to the attention of mankind were nothing but a clever fictional approach by a clever writer, used to induce in the reader of this "story" the illusion of reality. I myself feel this view to be wrong, in consideration of the opening remarks to the story, but I wish that you would definitely clear up this point one way or the other. If true, the facts brought out in this article ought to be placed before the public, without any possibility of being mistaken for fiction, as they might be of great importance in the future.

David A. Whitfield
Rochester, N. Y.

When we remarked on the fictional qualities of our stories, we were not referring to the articles. We specifically labeled the Angelucci story as a "True Mystic Adventure," and we shall continue to classify the material in this magazine as to whether it is in the category of fiction or fact. Does this answer your question?—Rap.

* * *

Dear Sir:

The article by A. M. Angelucci entitled "I Travelled in a Flying Saucer" while interesting enough does contain a discrepancy which

calls for an explanation either by the author or by the "voice" of the "saucer contact."

Mr. Angelucci states his contact was made in May '52, yet the "voice" told him at that time that Des Verges had been burned by "saucer people" when actually Des Verges wasn't in the news until the latter part of August '52. The news report about the Florida incident appeared on or around 27 August and Des Verges was burned two or three days prior to this date!

I am sure that either the author or the "saucer" have their dates confused and it should be interesting, if you publish this, to hear a plausible explanation, if at all possible."

A. V. Haslett,
Verdun, P. Q., Canada

We are duty-bound to publish your letter, of course. And also, we can offer a plausible explanation, and incidentally shoulder the blame for an inept bit of editing. Mr. Angelucci's story was a great deal longer than the version we published. We cut it personally. And we condensed what actually are a series of contacts with the saucer people into two contacts. The whole story can be found in Angelucci's own newspaper, which will conclusively prove that it was your editor who fouled up the dates. In the process of condensing the story to digest size, we "compressed" events, and thus the dates do not coincide. If you will write to Paul

M. Vest, 933-C 18th St., Santa Monica, Calif., you can secure a copy of this paper, and check for yourself.—Rap.

* * *

Dear Mr. Palmer:

I've read the first issue of MYSTIC and I don't like the idea of deliberately mixing fact and fiction. Will it not be hard for the reader to tell the difference? And perhaps the warning is nothing new; that such a policy can be so easily misused or "hammed up." I'd like to see MYSTIC turn into a digest of occult articles.

However, if MYSTIC is going to be so close to science-fiction, I have harbored a question for some months: if a citizen from another world came to earth, how *should* we treat him? How would we communicate with it, assuming that it couldn't speak our language. How would we relay our feelings, etc., and manage to make friends with it.

MYSTIC could publish the considered theories of its readers, too, to stimulate interest in occult matters. Or, as I would put it, the "science of the spirit."

David Stensvad
Minneapolis, Minn.

We will label our fiction and fact as such. Also, you will note in this issue that we are already beginning to include theoretical articles by our readers. MYSTIC will develop rapidly, and become the magazine no mystic can afford to miss. We intend to incorporate all

the things that are appropriate, and our readers are being very helpful with suggestions. As for making it a digest of articles alone, we suggest that you read Fate, which is the world's leading magazine of that type, and which cannot be equalled in that department. We don't intend to try. Also, we feel that MYSTIC has a somewhat different purpose.

As for a citizen of another world, the very fact that he was advanced enough to come here would mean that he would have some idea as to how to communicate when he got here. A friendly attitude, coupled with caution, and the rest would be a matter of working it out. It would be much easier than teaching a youngster how to read and write and speak. Would it be any more difficult than our forefathers communicating with the Indians?—Rap.

* * *

Dear Mr. Palmer:

I view with interest your new magazine, MYSTIC. I am glad to see you will retain a letter section in at least one of your magazines. Too many editors starting out with a new magazine, or going from pulp to 'slick' format omit this tie with the reader. And I hope you remember a statement you made some months back in OTHER WORLDS "Money in OW is safer than in any bank"; you do intend to fill out those incomplete subscriptions to OTHER WORLDS with copies of either

SCIENCE STORIES or MYSTIC, do you not?

I am struck with additional interest, and some amusement, in your editorial statements anent the common brown bat . I don't know whether you actually do not KNOW the history of the bat, or are being facetious for editorial sake; however, the fact remains that the common bat merely branched off from the main stem of the mammalian family tree somewhat earlier than more common species. There is no dark, devious story behind their history; they are not the only odd animals in existence, you know. Take the opossum, the kangaroo, the koala, and other such animals (all of which, with the exception of the 'possum, are native to Australia.) Like the alligator, the bat is an animal that has remained, for various reasons, the same throughout history, instead of changing, as have the more common animals.

And I'm afraid you'll find that evolution did NOT fail to provide the bat with eyes . he has them, very small, to be sure, and of little use in seeing anything, but they are there. Dame Nature is a wonderful gal . she looks after her own. The mole, too, has eyes which are merely superficial, and for the same reason as the bat —eyes, in their native habitats are simply of no use. The mole spends most of his time, like the bat, in places where it is simply too dark to see anything, so what

use eyes? The bat has been provided with "radar" because he is a flying mammal, and necessarily needs something to give quick warning of obstacles in the path of his flight, his eyes being of no use. The mole has NOT been provided with "radar" because he crawls slowly through the earth, spending his whole life underground; therefore, he needs no warning system, since meeting with an obstacle would simply mean that he would go under, over, or around, it.

Why be afraid of bats? Simply because we ARE afraid of bats proves no theory that they are dangerous, in any way. Some people are afraid of dogs. Others are afraid of hawks. That doesn't mean that dogs or hawks, as respective species, are dangerous. Surely, individual members of the species, but as a whole; no.

If MYSTIC is supposed to be a magazine of strange fiction, how about getting rid of those ads for occultist and pseudo-scientific drivel, on the back pages? They do nothing to give your magazine a good name. And, considering the fact that you must have advertising to exist, you might contact advertisers with more down-to-earth products to sell.

How about that "True Mystic Adventure Department"? How can you prove that a story about seeing or hearing ghosties and gholins and things-that-go-boomp-in-the-night is true? I

could write a story like that, and quote witnesses, and I would stake my life savings on the fact that you'd never be able to prove that it WASN'T true. You might be able to cast serious doubt on it, but *proving* its falsity? I know of a case in fact about a girl who woke up one night, in a bed that was shoved against a wall, which curved over her head as it rose to meet the ceiling. As she woke up, she saw a figure of a man standing between her bed and the wall, despite the fact that the bed was flush with the wall. This wouldn't have been bad, she said, except for the fact that, where the wall curved, so did the figure. She swears up and down, with straight face, that she was not dreaming, and she saw what she saw. I could go on for hours, quoting cases like that, which are all SUPPOSED to be true. But how do you prove it?

Reminds me of the old one that Wilson was supposed to have pulled at the Versailles conference when he laid down his 14 Points. He said, "There shall be no secrets kept amongst the Four Powers." Only trouble is, how are you going to *tell* if somebody is keeping a secret from you?

Ray Thompson

Norfolk, Nebraska

Yes, Ray, any of my faithful subscribers to OTHER WORLDS can renew their subscription to any of my new magazines at the same rate, and can receive any magazine

they like best, or all of them, to fill out their unexpired subscription. They need but express their wish, and the deed is done;

Thanks for your information on the bat. As for how can we tell if a story-teller is lying, we can't. But must we automatically assume he is lying, if he can't prove it? That is our big trouble today—the show-me attitude. Not that we should accept everything we hear—quite the contrary, we should test it to the best of our ability, and then accept it if we so choose. But to accept NOTHING we can't prove positively limits us to what is already known, or what we can prove on our own—in which case, why listen to anyone's story? We have a vast majority of people who are so afraid of being called gullible that they refuse to believe anything, or even consider believing it. They reject the new idea in the spirit of distrust. Is suspicion without effort to justify it any better than gullibility without any effort to apply proof? And if only in the light of courtesy, isn't it better to say, "I don't disbelieve you," rather than a flat "I don't believe you"? In the latter, you take the burden of disproof on yourself, and is that smart?—Rap.

* * *

Gentlemen:

Thank you, Ray Palmer, for giving us MYSTIC. Newsstands today are so saturated with muck in which little un-painted minds

with tightly nailed shutters grovel that it is definitely a treat to find something enlightening and uplifting through which open minds may browse. We like the way you present your materials—as if to say "Here it is. Do with it what you will. Accept what fits; hold the rest in abeyance to be proved or disproved."

Let's have more articles like Orfeo Matthew Angelucci's! We hope any embarrassment he may suffer through lack of understanding on the part of the "masses" will be fully compensated by the appreciation of those of us who can see with more than our physical eyes. To those of us who are ready for it, the truth of Mr. Angelucci's story will be apparent. To others it will come later. The explanation indicated as to the whence and why of space visitors verifies precisely the very definite conviction that came to me with the release of the first flying saucer story several years ago—a conviction which I have had no occasion to discard. It is true I have not seen a flying saucer. Neither have I seen a pen and ink sketch of God's plan for the progress of the human race; yet I know there is a plan—and that it is a good one. Analytically, is Mr. Angelucci's experience one-half so "fantastic" as the material state of mind into which we, as a race, have allowed ourselves to fall? . . . swayed by greed, selfishness and hate, when everything about

us was created for harmony, selflessness and brotherly love?

Enclosed is my check for additional copies of Volume 1, issue 1, to be loaned those who seem ready to be flushed out of their hiding place in the chaparral of quiescent thinking.

Mrs. Mera Gaskill
Claremont, Calif.

* * *

Dear Sir:

The Gateway news stand furnished the first copy of MYSTIC MAGAZINE which I wished to examine. In the dim past I bought the first number of the *Saturday Evening Post*, and I have missed few weeks since, which shows that I have much experience as a reader. The editorial in MYSTIC MAGAZINE desired comment.

I read little of SCIENCE FICTION. Most of this literature looks like it came off the assembly line. Few writers today have the ability to make characters live like Rider Haggard, Conan Doyle or Oppenheim.

However the story of reincarnation did arouse my interest for from the earliest days I have believed in it and now at 81 I have been able to watch the individuals and groups that seem to come from the past.

As an early member of the Theosophical Society I was in a group lead by Anne Besant, I heard Leadbeater's Chicago lectures, and corresponded with W. Q. Judge. Then I knew a Hindoo who was far along

the path, a Jain, who remembered his former incarnations. Also a very oriental looking friend who tells me that in his last incarnation he was a Buddhist priest in Tibet and he is still a Buddhist.

Reincarnation provides such a background for a sweep through the ages, for a person is not supposed to come back for a thousand years, that I wondered why MYSTIC printed the story it did. In "Ardath" Marie Correlli did a great job with material and names stolen from THE SECRET DOCTRINE.

Let me say with old Jo Jefferson,

MAY YOU LIVE LONG AND PROSPER,

H. H. McNaughton,
Knoxville, Tenn.

Reincarnation is one of the things that need testing. What seems to be reincarnation, can also be "obsession," or "possession." And if it is possible for it to be any of these three, or even something else, it is dangerous to assume that it is one of them.

We ran the story on reincarnation because it is the first of many stories on reincarnation, each treating with a different subject, so that eventually it may be possible to draw some conclusions from the whole. I remember an instance that was described to me some years ago of a man who remembered a past life, went to the place he remembered, and found the man he remembered himself to

be still living there! I was younger then, and cockier, and I rejected the story as pure fiction. Today I am not so sure. A living man might have intruded his identity into that of another so as to cause the simulation of memory, and it is not such a far stretch of imagination to construe (given the continued existence of the ego after death) that a dead man could intrude his identity on that of a living man, and cause the simulation of memory to misguide the living man.

In "Ardath" Marie Corelli did a great job, stolen or not. And so far as I know, the author gave THE SECRET DOCTRINE to the world with no strings attached. —Rap.

* * *

Dear Mr. Palmer:

I'm disappointed in Mystic Magazine—at least with the first issue. *The Hidden Kingdom* was an awful build-up to a terrific let down. It is too sexy and just does not leave me with the feeling that I have gained anything spiritually. Now had you played up The Bible version of this you really would have had a great story. According to The Bible, Satan and all his hordes were cast out of the Heavens in 1914 and as they have a short time before The Battle of Armageddon they are playing havoc with individuals, governments and this general system of things. We have only nineteen years left before we enter the Kingdom Age,

which makes Satan's reign exactly twelve years to go, as seven years of the nineteen years must be spent in cleaning up the earth in preparation for the millennium. I think everyone can see the influence of these demons, as we are having more vandalism, murders, suicides, disagreements and general confusion than ever before and you can just picture the hysteria and turmoil when the H-bombs fall on the United States. Old Satan is going to use every method at his finger tips to rule and destroy this old world of ours before Jehovah chains him at Armageddon. The Bible tells us that the Anti-Christ hordes will overrun the whole world before the end comes and that no doubt means that the U.S. will be under domination by the Communists, so you can imagine what suffering we all have to endure if we survive the bombings, for heaven knows we have no defense, and only our trust and endurance in our Heavenly Father is going to save us, and our belief in the peaceful kingdom that is so close at hand over which Christ will rule from his Heavenly throne. To work toward such a goal is surely worthwhile and one must seek the things of the spirit rather than the carnal.

Could we have more stories like Orfeo Angelucci's "I Traveled in A Flying Saucer"? This is one of the most interesting stories I've read in a long time and so sincere I really believe it!

How about excerpts from Swedenborg's experiences, Marie Correlli and others like them, who have really had true mystic contacts, besides modern ones?

Would it be possible to reprint in Mystic chapters from "The Book of Curiosities: containing Ten Thousand Wonders and Curiosities of Nature and Art which includes phenomena etc. by Rev. I. Platts? I own a copy and it explains a lot of the unknown happenings and phenomena which readers of Fate Magazine ask about. To me this is much better reading than "Go Visit Your Grave" and stories of this frightening ilk.

I don't want to sound like an old gripe about MYSTIC but several others have made similar comments on it and I believe in constructive criticism and I do believe you can make it a better and more interesting magazine by avoiding the novel type story and giving us stories of experience instead, as truth is always more interesting than fiction.

We have all seen the flying saucers here in Michigan, and my son and I saw a cigar type one about three years ago going at a terrific rate of speed—about 1000 miles per hour would be my guess. We see them so frequently that it is old stuff with us and we do believe in them regardless of derision of scoffers. In fact one saucer came down so low over a Girl Scout campout here in Southfield

Township about four years ago that the girls all fell to their knees and prayed that God would protect them from it. It was a harrowing experience for them.

How about a dream column in Mystic? I often have prophetic dreams and so do my sons, and I know others must have them too, and as the Book of Revelation said we would have them often in these last days, it would be interesting to hear about them, don't you think Mr. Palmer?

With sincere appreciation for your new venture in MYSTIC magazine I do hope it improves as it grows older and since you seem to be an investigative person and a seeker after truth, I just know that it will.

Mrs. John W. Lemon
Royal Oak, Mich.

It is extremely difficult to apply chronology to the Bible, and your editor would prefer to be less positive about the actual dates of Armageddon, Satan's casting down, etc. For instance, what if Revelation was a history rather than a prognostication? What if what St. John saw in his dream was something that happened long, long ago? True, it could be happening again. It is our opinion that these things happen often. What if nothing happens such as you describe in the twelve years you mention? If St. John had predicted that in 1914 Satan would be cast down to Earth from Heaven, what would you think of the Bible to-

day? *DID* such a thing happen? Yes, there are such things as vandalism, murders, suicides, etc. But do we *KNOW* that it is the Satan cast out specifically in 1914?

Bear in mind that we do not reject your date, nor St. John. We only wonder if our interpretation is right? Is another possible? How many people have "sold their all" and gone to a mountain top to await a world's-end which then failed to come, to their sheepish chagrin? If we assume an Armageddon in which we are helpless because it is foreordained, we become sheep helpless to lift a hand to guide the progress of events for ourselves. What then of the commandment to "subdue the Earth, for it is thine"?

Your suggestion for a dream column is a good one. How about you readers sending in your dreams, and we'll present the most interesting.—Rap.

* * *

Dear Contemporary:

You have embarked upon a very important, but also a very dangerous mission with the publication of your "MYSTIC" magazine. I trust (and hope) that you are fully prepared and equipped to carry it out successfully.

We of the "ESOTERIC REALM" are extremely sensitive and alert to any abuse or misuse of the term "MYSTIC" by materialistic elements, and we just happen to have means and methods of thwarting any such abuses.

There is an old adage to the effect that—"The pen is mightier than the sword"! While this old truism still holds good today in general principle, it should be revised to read—"The typewriter is mightier than either the Atomic or the Hydrogen Bomb"!

Many historical precedents could be cited wherein the "ESOTERIC" contributors to civilization have not only been frustrated and thwarted, but ridiculed, reviled, persecuted, tortured and even brutally murdered by their ignorant countrymen and contemporaries.

But it is significant to note that each and every one of these victims of the ignorant mobs are not only remembered but highly honored today, even thousands of years after their existence upon this planet, while their persecutors were soon forgotten.

Among the victims of these human atrocities were such people as Homer, Aesop, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Pericles, Hypatia of Alexandria, Roger Bacon, Copernicus, Galileo, Bruno, Columbus, Spinoza, John Couch Adams, Charles Robert Darwin, Swedenborg, Robert Fulton, the Wright Brothers, and many others of equal originality, vision and foresight.

During the past half century, which your correspondent has observed with a keen interest from a position of vast perspective, the gullible public has been deceived and regimented into a certain

pattern and trend of thought far more dogmatic and ridiculous than any of those imposed by tyrants and usurpers of the past.

So! It is not at all surprising that the wonders of Mystic and Cosmic phenomena today are received with such skepticism, cynicism, and sarcastic ridicule, not only by the ignorant masses but by their leaders and teachers, and even by our so-called "experts" in governmental and military agencies.

For example, the "Flying Saucer" subject today, while perhaps more sensational for the time being, is far less important to the current inhabitants of this planet than many incidents of the past in which great Earthly achievements have been ridiculed and rejected by the "wisest-of-the-wise."

Pythagoras conceived and coined the phrase—"MUSIC OF THE SPHERES"—2500 years ago, and yet there is not a handful of modern musicians or composers who actually comprehend the significance of this "ESOTERIC" term.

He conceived and practiced the arts of "Musical Therapy" and "Color Therapy" thousands of years before it was ever adopted by modern practitioners.

Roger Bacon of the Middle 13th Century, not only experimented and achieved great advancements in chemistry, optics, explosives and steam power, but he predicted the airplane, the steamship and

the suspension bridge so far ahead of his time that he was cruelly and unjustly imprisoned by his selfish, jealous and treacherous contemporaries.

The record could go on and on of these atrocities throughout the centuries but there is no more (in fact less) promise that they will be heeded today than in the past.

As a publisher and purveyor of enlightenment in this day and age, it may interest you to know that there has existed upon paper for over twenty years specific projects which conform to the prophecies of many ages as to the ultimate center and "SEAT" of a genuine Global Civilization in the Western Hemisphere.

These projects are not merely a "blueprint" for a better world, as were those of Plato in his "REPUBLIC"; Sir Thomas More in his "UTOPIA"; nor of Sir Francis Bacon in his "NEW ATLANTIS," but they constitute the actual brick, stone, sand, lime, mortar-box, mortar-board and hoe.

What is more, they provide the inspiration, incentive and ignition necessary to arouse the SKILL and the WILL of the HONEST AND HONORABLE GENIUS OF THE MODERN WORLD, toward a new and a truly GLOBAL CIVILIZATION.

Roy Brandt

Hialeah, Fla.

What you say is very interesting, but we are of the opinion that you overestimate one fact

—the ignorance of present-day experts in governmental and military agencies. I feel sure that both the white and the black are well understood, and perhaps the black even more than is safe to think about. As for the public being deceived on many things, no reasoning person doubts the existence of a vast web of propaganda. It is the one evil that has plunged us into the situation we now find ourselves.—Rap.

* * *

Ray Palmer:

Quotes from your editorial in the January 1954 issue. "Mark Twain was interested in mysticism"; "the entertainment of many"; "Mystic Magazine is to give you pleasure"; "seeking to learn vicariously"; "experience by proxy"; "We do not propose to indulge in such serious things"; "not a magazine devoted to a Crusade." These quotes serve to indicate the present policy of your magazine.

"Pleasure" is for the idle and purposeless person whose life has no significance to himself or his world. Too long have we approached life "by proxy." As an example, the football and baseball games where we are getting our exercise "by proxy," which does not benefit our bodies or stimulate our minds. The movies where a good many women experience their sex lives.

I would say for your magazine to be a success it must more nearly

relate itself to the needs of the people. And a crying need of ours today is to be related to the Truth your magazine is attempting to explore.

"Space ships"; "the men from Mars"; and all such are for the mentally immature and the emotionally inadequate. They are certainly not fit for consumption by our children, why wish it on the adults? Granted, there are a good many morons milling around, and grown-ups so-called are more often mentally and emotionally teen-age adolescents. But why not at least give the adults a break! Expose them to a few of the essentials. Some of them might surprise you.

There is a true mystic field, the one I'm sure in which Mark Twain was interested. I've always been particularly interested in this phase of his development.

The life each human lives is much more interesting than any story man can dream up. Let us relate ourselves to the truths of reality that we may find a workable solution to some of the problems with which we are today confronted. Let us finish with escapism in literature and in our lives, for it is only thus we shall work life out.

I can sympathize with a certain weariness you must feel when you say; "not a magazine devoted to 'a Crusade'." But, Life is a crusade. And any undertaking to succeed must be approached in the

spirit of a crusade.

Elinor Pyle

Perrysburg, Ohio

Would you call the song the Volga boatmen sing as they row their boats "pleasure"? Yet it makes their work easier. Is the chant of the sailor as he pulls on the line "pleasure"? Yet it helps pull the line. Is God's heaven a place of grim purpose, or is a smile or a joke or a joyous shout a part of it? Is asceticism the "royal road" to perfection? Is it the mature man and woman we must reach, or the immature, the child? As the tree is bent

Of course we must not practice "escapism." But is that what we inferred when we said "entertainment," "pleasure," "vicarious experience"? As we trudge up the hill, let us sing, so that the way will not be so doleful. The highest flying bird is the sweetest singer! —Rap.

* * *

Dear Sir:

Thank you for being so prompt in sending the copy of Mystic Magazine that I sent for. I read it all at one sitting and must say it is a great story magazine.

I have always been interested in literature of that kind.

In 1914 I subscribed to a series of lessons called The Master Key System so know a little about what mind can accomplish for one when that person will only apply himself. Your method of telling stories drawn on facts of Occult lore is

far better than just telling the whys and wherefores of these things.

Warren A. Gregory,

Marblehead, Mass.

* * *

Dear Mr. Palmer:

I am a subscriber to your new magazine MYSTIC. It is interesting. Your own stories are by far the best. I especially enjoy the fact articles. In the January issue in your story *The Devil's Empire*, I failed to quite get the idea of an arch-angle. I always thought Lucifer was an arch-angel. I once knew a young lady who received a letter addressed to his "dear angle." She quite indignantly informed me she wasn't anybody's angle. How about Lucifer, Mr. Palmer? Is he really an angle or an angel?

Evelyn M. Fischer

Garden City, Kansas

We must confess this is one of those "hidden" bits of esoteric knowledge that are sprinkled all through the stories in MYSTIC. However, we have no aversion to explaining. We've explained this to philologists before, and gotten a great big horse laugh. You see, it is our own personal theory that the English language (language of the Angles) is the original language, that is, the language that is spoken in space, or in the regions where the Angels dwell (for we believe in angels, Evelyn!). You see, back in 1944 we first presented the mysterious "Shaver Alphabet" to the world.

It is an amazing thing, which makes more sense the more ancient the language to which it is applied (in a phonetic rather than alphabetical sense). Modern word experts say English is the newest language; I believe it to be the oldest. Or rather, closest in sound-meaning today than any other to the language spoken the Universe over. Why the Angles should speak a much older language than races seemingly older than they is a mystery, yet there is a legend that the Angles were one of the "lost tribes." An Angle, then, in my thinking, is a being more than human. Is an Angel, who descends to "the daughters of men" finds them "fair" and mates with them, thus becoming responsible for a new breed of man, a "lost" Angel?

It is my theory that if Angles inhabit what we call space, etheric worlds, then they have an infinite domain; and if they are responsible for raising up man on the corporeal planets, then on each planet they visit on their mission, the language of the Angles is the language they first speak, and that all other languages are just outgrowths as time passes, distorted tremendously, and with infinite variations. If that is how planets are "seeded down" with mankind capable of eternal existence in "heaven," then how could the language beginning be otherwise?

However, don't take all this too seriously. I use it often to amaze and amuse the word experts, and

sometimes I find a receptive ear. Incidentally, the name Evelyn, in the language of the Angles means one in whom resides the vital energy of life, the capability of reproduction, the provider of the seed of life. Eve was the vital energy. Evelyn is the embodiment of Eve. When Adam was placed upon the Earth, he was incapable of reproduction. Then Eve came, and he was able to reproduce himself. Later came the Angles, and the result was MAN.—Rap.

* * *

Dear Mr. Palmer:

Yesterday afternoon I purchased a MYSTIC magazine and already have read it from cover to cover. It's terrific! My mind has been in a constant state of exclamation since I started. And though much of the information served to add to or clear up what is familiar to me already, my questions about some of the stories are innumerable and intense. You simply must answer one for me. "The League of the Living Dead" just about got my goat. What goes anyway? This is one phase of the occult that I haven't pursued at all.

Ann Lopear

Culver City, Calif.

League of the Living Dead is not strictly the type of material we wish to present, largely because it is too much in line with the actual superstitions concerning werewolves and zombies and activated bodies of the dead by elemental spirits. We admit, how-

ever, that among the tenets of black magic, the reactivation of corpses is a large part, and is concerned, to a great extent, with the lack of belief in an after-life, and a searching for means to gain a pseudo-life in a particularly ghastly and revolting manner. We believe that most of the stories of werewolves, zombies, etc, come from a search for a physical means to continue life in the flesh after death. The mystic today searches for a higher, more ethereal existence.—Rap.

* * *

Dear Ray:

Is your Shaver Mystery, Man from Tomorrow, etc, a series of publicity stunts?

Dan Wegars

Berkeley, Calif.

Sorry we deleted so much of your letter, Dan, but we just wanted to leave out all the introduction to your actual question, which demands an answer. Dan, we've never done anything just for publicity. In other words, we never have presented a thing with tongue in cheek, nor to deceive. The Shaver Mystery is not a mystery to us, but an actuality, although the mechanics of that actuality are subject to argument. As for prophecy, all of us have a gift of foresight to a certain extent. Sometimes we get a flash, a hunch, and it turns out to be true. It's just that I've always felt it wise to play

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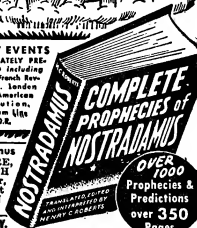
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my hunches. Unless it's a horse-race. I don't bet on the horses!
—Rap.

* * *

Dear Sirs:

I'd just like to write a line of congratulations on your new mag. It's the best thing I've seen on the stands yet. Keep up the good work!

David Smith
Miami, Fla.

* * *

My Dear Sir:

Congratulations! I am proud that I am a charter subscriber to your fine magazine, MYSTIC. Success to you.

Chas. E. Murray
San Diego, Calif.

Thanks, Charles. And for those of you who wish to get in on the Seance Circle for next issue, we'd be happy to receive your letters on any subject whatsoever. We can take it and we can dish it out!
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